

SERMONS

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of the Liberty of Moral Agents.	The Excellency of Moral Qualifications.
A Virtuous Mind the best Help to understand True Religion.	Of Humility.
The Practice of Morality leads to the Practice of the Gospel.	Of Poverty of Spirit.
The Character of a Good Man.	Of the Virtue of Charity.
The Nature of Humane Actions.	The Nature of Relative Duties.
How to judge of Moral Actions.	The Inconsistency of the Love of God, with the Love of the World.
The Nature of Religious Truths.	
Of Christ's calling Sinners to Repentance.	The Folly of mocking at Sin.

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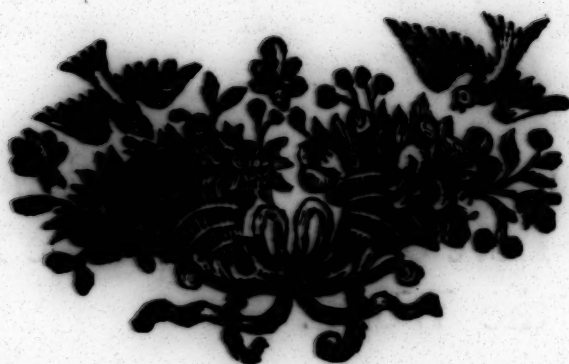
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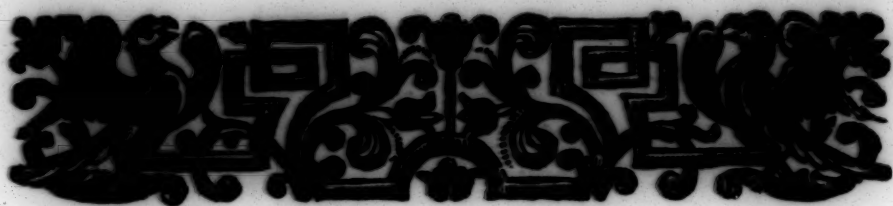
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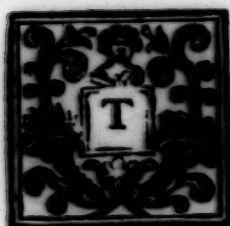
S E R M O N I.

Of the Liberty of Moral Agents.



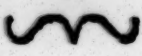
St J O H. viii. 32.

*And ye shall know the Truth, and
the Truth shall make you Free.*



H E Evangelist, in the fore-^{S E R M.}
going part of this Chapter, ^{I.}
having recorded a large Dis-
course of our Saviour's con-
cerning his being *the Light*
of the World, or, the *Teacher of true*
Religion, ver. 12; concerning the Testi-
mony he bore of *himself* by the Nature
V O L. III. B and

S E R M. and Tendency of his *Doctrine*; and the
 I. Testimony *the Father* bore of him, by his
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 to

to take some private Opportunity of *kill-* S E R M.
ling him ; as appears from the following I.
part of the History : He said unto them, 
ver. 31. *If ye continue in my Word, then*
are ye my Disciples indeed ; If ye will be
truly my Disciples, ye must not only
profess by a sudden perswasion to be con-
vinced of the Truth of what I say, but
ye must so retain and steddily adhere to
my Doctrine, as to conform your Lives
and Practices thereto ; *If ye continue in*
my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.
And then he adds in the Words of the
Text ; *And ye shall know the Truth, and*
the Truth shall make you Free. The
meaning is ; And by such Practice, you
will continually attain a more and more
perfect *Knowledge* of the Truth ; and
That Knowledge will secure to you the
greatest and most desirable *Freedom* in the
World.

THAT by *Truth* in the *New Testament*,
is meant the general Doctrine of the Gos-
pel revealed to us by Christ, I suppose
needs not any particular Proof in this
place. That *continuing* in the Practice of
Christ's Commandments, and sincerely
endeavouring to obey the Will of God, is

S E R M. one of the best and greatest Helps to enable a man to understand perfectly, the *Truth and Reasonableness*, the *Necessity and Excellency* of the Doctrine of the Gospel; is also sufficiently evident, without farther Explication at This Time. The only Difficulty in the Words of the Text, is the Sense of that latter part, *And the Truth shall make you Free*. For what Relation there is between *Truth* in the *Understanding* and *Liberty* in the *Actions*, does not appear at first sight: And 'tis still in the reading of Scripture as great a Paradox to some Christians at This day, as it seemed to be to the *Jews* at the time when it was spoken; that it should be said of such Persons as had never been *Slaves*, that the Truth should make them *Free*. The Explication is given by our Saviour in the Words following the Text; and yet given in such a manner, as not to appear but to those who read with Attention. For the *Jews*, when our Saviour had spoken these Words, *The Truth shall make you Free*, taking them in the gross and literal Sense, replied, ver. 33. *We be Abraham's Seed*; we have by Descent a natural Right to Freedom, *and were*

were never in bondage to any man; How S E R M.
sayest thou then, Ye shall be made Free? I.

Upon This, our Lord opens to them the true Sense of the Words, ver. 34. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* Which is to say: Ye fancy, because with respect to *Bodily Service* ye are not in bondage to any man, that therefore ye are really *Free men*. But forasmuch as *to whomsoever men yield themselves servants to obey, his Servants they are to whom they obey; and of whomsoever a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage;* therefore, so long as you continue in your Sins, you are as really Slaves, as any person that is in bondage to the severest Master; For there cannot be a greater Slave, than he who is under the Power and Dominion of unreasonable Lusts. This is the evident meaning of that expression; *Whosoever committeth Sin*; not by inadvertency or surprize, not by mistake or sudden incursion, but deliberately and habitually, as was the Case of those *Jews* our Saviour discoursed with; *whosoever so committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* And This will illustrate the meaning of that more difficult

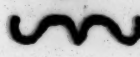
S E R M. passage, which follows immediately in the
 I. next words, ver. 35 ; *And the Servant abideth not in the House for ever ; but the Son abideth for ever : If the Son therefore shall make you Free, ye shall be Free indeed.* I know indeed, says our Lord, that you esteem yourselves highly, upon your belonging to the Family and House of God, which was first set in order by *Moses* ; and that upon this account you will claim to yourselves even That spiritual Freedom, whereof I am now speaking. But, let me assure you, neither is that Privilege you boast of, your being the peculiar people of God, sufficient of itself to give you real Freedom from the Dominion and Guilt of Sin ; neither, if it could, was the Authority of *Moses* intended to continue always, but only for a Time, like that of a *Servant*, and to give place at length to the Authority of the *Son*, whose Government in God's house is to continue for ever. Wherefore the only means, by which you can preserve to yourselves the Privilege of God's peculiar Family, and obtain a perfect Freedom from the Slavery of Sin, is, that ye submit to the Authority of the *Son* who
 is

is now come into the World, and that S E R M.
I.
ye continue in Obedience to his Doctrine and Government. *The Servant abideth not in the House for ever; but the Son abideth for ever: If the Son therefore shall make you Free, ye shall be Free indeed.*

T H E Design and Meaning of our Saviour's whole Discourse being thus explained, the Doctrine contained in the Words of the Text, appears evidently to be This; That the *religious Restraints* laid upon men by the Gospel are really and truly the *greatest Liberty*; and the *Service of God*, the most perfect Freedom: *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed: And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free.*

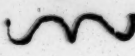
LIBERTY, all men are sensible, is a Jewel of inestimable Value; and therefore there is nothing more earnestly or more justly contended for, nothing more universally or more reasonably desired. But, alas! As *Children* are often eagerly desirous of what they do not understand, and know not when they are in Possession of what they desire, but are put off and pleased with false resemblances of things, and hold fast something really contrary

S E R M. to what they think they are fond of:

I.  So, in This particular, *Men* themselves, even Wise men and Learned, the Rich and the Potent, the cunning and the most sensible in other Affairs, are very frequently imposed upon, (I should say, impose upon themselves,) and love to be deceived, and take pains to abuse their own Understandings; and, while they love Liberty above all things, embrace Slavery in the stead thereof; shutting their Eyes, and calling things by false Names, and stiling Bondage Liberty, and Liberty Bondage. For while *All* men contend for Liberty, wherein does the *greater part* of the World imagine true Liberty to consist? Most men seem to place it in being allowed to let loose the Reins to all their Appetites and Passions without controul; to be under no restraint either from the Laws of Men, or from the Fear of God. *Princes* generally think it to consist in having the Power of tyrannizing over the multitude of their Subjects, and sacrificing the common Rights and Properties of Mankind to their own single and unreasonable Ambition. The *common People* are apt to place it in unbounded Licentiousness, and having no superiour but the
the

the Humour of the Multitude. The Co-^{S E R M.}
vetous person would gladly be allowed to
 I.
 increase his Treasure by some shorter steps
 than those of honest Industry and patient
 Labour. The *Debauchee* thinks no Chains
 more troublesome, than those which would
 confine his Pleasures from irregularity and
 excess. And oh! how happy would the
revengeful spirit be, might he but have
 Liberty to satisfy his Malice, without pre-
 sent Shame or future Danger! This, 'tis
 to be feared, is the Notion too great a
 part of Mankind have of Liberty. And
 what a Liberty is This? Is it not like the
 Liberty a Madman desires, of being per-
 mitted to destroy himself? Is it any thing
 more, than a Liberty to chuse the worst
 of Slaveries, and to exchange the Go-
 vernment of a most reasonable Master,
 for that of the worst and cruellest Ty-
 rant; For, *what* does the *Ambitious Prince*
 or the *Licentious Multitude*; what does
 the *Covetous*, and *Revengeful*, or the *De-*
bauched Sinner; but only chuse to be a
 Servant to *Passion*, instead of a Follower
 of *Right Reason*? What is it that makes
 a *Beast* be a Creature of less Liberty than
Man, but only that its natural Appetites
 more

S E R M. more necessarily govern all its Actions,
 I. and that it is not indued with a Faculty
 of Reason, whereby to exert itself, and
 gain a Power or Liberty of over-ruling
 those Appetites? For if the true Liberty
 of a Moral Agent does not principally
 consist in the Power of over-ruling such
 Appetites; *wherein* lies the Excellency of
 humane Nature at all, above the infe-
 rior Creation? Or what superiority has
 Man above the Beasts that perish, in any
Moral regard; if his greater Knowledge
 and Understanding serves only to make
 him feel and be sensible of his Subjection
 to those lower Appetites, which the other
 Creatures are naturally subject to, with-
 out being sensible or having any uneasy
 Reflexions that they are so? Is not the
 Difference, in such a Case, This only;
 that the Man is really the greater Slave,
 or has the less Liberty of the Two, be-
 cause *He* only is by his Reason capable of
 understanding that he wants it? If a
 man's Body be under confinement, or he
 be impotent in his Limbs, he is then
 deprived of his *bodily* Liberty: And for
 the same Reason, if his *Mind* be blinded
 by sottish Errours, and his Reason over-
 ruled

ruled by violent Passions; Is not This S E R M.
likewise plainly as great a Slavery and as I.
true a Confinement? For, *to whomsoever* 
men yield themselves servants to obey, (as
the Apostle excellently expresses it,) are
they not *his servants to whom they obey,*
Rom. vi. 16; and of *whomsoever a man is*
overcome, of the same also is he not brought
in bondage, 2 Pet. ii. 19?

BUT here it is obvious for the Liber-
tine to reply, that he has no Notion of
the Slavery we speak of, nor is at all sen-
sible that he is under any Restraint: For
what greater Liberty can a man have, than
to do what he pleases? or what can he
desire more, than to do what he wills
without controul? I answer: This is in-
deed the True Definition of mere *physical*
or *natural* Liberty; that is to say, of That
Liberty which is common to Man with
every living Creature, with the savagest
Lyon, and with the meanest Insect. For
They also do what they will, and go and
come as they please, and follow the In-
stinct, and gratify all the Appetites of Na-
ture. But the Liberty of a *Moral* Agent
and of a *rational* Being, implies some-
thing more. It implies a Liberty of do-
ing

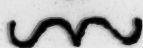
S E R M. ing what is *Right*; a Freedom of heark-
 I. ning to what *Reason* dictates, and a Power
 of executing what the unprejudiced and
 improved *Understanding* judges to be fit;
 fit and reasonable, fit for *Him* who is a
 rational Person, fit for any *Other* rational
 Person in *His* place, to do. And *this* Li-
 berty the Sensual person parts with; and
 suffers himself to be captivated, *against*
 his Reason, by the Law of Sin.

T H E Licentious Sinner will still reply;
 He is not *sensible* of any such Captivity,
 or any Slavery he is under; He gives him-
 self his full Liberty to do what he thinks
 fit; and greater Freedom than This how
 can he desire! But the Answer to This
 Fallacy is evident. For as a Man while
 he sleeps in his Prison, is not sensible
 of his Confinement, and yet continues
 confined: Or a Madman imagines the
 Room he is shut up in to be as spa-
 cious as the World; and yet receives no
 enlargement: Or an Idiot embraces and
 admires his Chain as the brightest Orna-
 ment, and yet it continues a Chain: So
 the vicious Libertine, while his Eyes are
 blinded with Ignorance and Prejudice, his
 Understanding darkned with false Repre-
 sentations.

sentations, and his Will bribed perpetually with deceitful Allurements; while he loves the Dominion of Sin, and takes pleasure in the Practice of Unrighteousness, and silences the Voice of Reason and Conscience; he fancies himself Master of the most unbounded Liberty, and yet at the same time is really in bondage to the most unreasonable Service. The Scripture describes this State by a most elegant similitude, of mens being Dead in *Trespases and Sins*; Eph. ii. 1, 5; by their being inclosed in *the Snare of the Devil, and taken captive by him at his Will*; 2 Tim. ii. 26; by their being brought into Captivity to *the Law of Sin*; Rom. vii. 23. By the History of *Samson*, who, after many repeated insults, yet would not see the Bondage he was in, till his Strength was departed from him: And by the description of a foolish young man led away with the inticements of a strange Woman; Prov. vii. 21. *With her much fair Speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straitway, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks; Till a dart strike through*

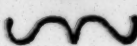
S E R M.

I.



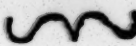
SERM. *through his liver, as a Bird hasteth to the*
 I. *snare, and knoweth not that it is for his*
 Life.

BUT This, is not generally the Case of Sinners. More usually, they not only are in Captivity to Sin, but feel also and know themselves to be so; and yet have not Courage to assert their Liberty. Their Reason is over-ruled; and their Passions govern them, even against their Judgement. Which, in a figurative sense, is exactly what Solomon literally complained of, *Ecclef. x. 7; I have seen Servants upon Horses, and Princes walking as Servants upon the Earth.* When Reason, which ought to govern, is thus dethroned; and the Fear of God, and all Sense of Religion laid aside; the man is then under the Dominion of his Passions, as of many disagreeing Masters to be served at once; and his Heart is like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up mire and dirt; *Is. lvii. 20.* He is tossed to and fro with impotent and impatient Desires, torn in pieces with eager and impetuous Appetites, pushed on by unruly and exorbitant Affections, tormented with vain and disappointing Hopes, and as often with groundless or too well-grounded

grounded *Fears*; consumed with *Envy*, S E R M.
 or swelled with *Pride*; raging with *An-* I.
ger, or anxious after *Revenge*. This is 
 the thralldom of a man enslaved to Sin;
 and *Who shall deliver him from the Body*
of this Death? The Scripture describes
 the miserable state of such Persons, by
 many elegant ways of Expression: Tel-
 ling us, that they are *Servants of Sin*;
 John. viii. 34. *Servants to uncleanness and*
to iniquity; Rom. vi. 19; and *Servants of*
Corruption; 2 Pet. ii. 19; that they cannot
cease from Sin; 2 Pet. ii. 14; that Sin hath Pl xix. 13.
Dominion over them, and reigns in their cxix. 133.
mortal Bodies, while they obey it in the
Lusts thereof; Rom. vi. 14. 12. That tho'
 in their mind they approve the Law of
 God, yet they see another law in their
 members warring against the law of their
 mind, and bringing them into captivity to
 the law of Sin; so that they cannot do the
 things that they would; Rom. vii. 22; and
 Gal. v. 17. That when at any time to
 will is present with them, yet how to per-
 form that which is good they find not;
 For the good that they would, they do not;
 but the evil which they would not, That
 they do; Rom. vii. 18, and ver. 15; That
 which

S E R M. *which they do, they allow not ; For what*
 I. *they would, That do they not ; but what*
 they hate, *That they do.* All which, is
 comprized in One expressive word in the
 verse foregoing, ver. 14 ; they are *sold* un-
 der Sin : That is, they have by long ill
 habits and corrupt practice, as it were
given up themselves, *parted with their*
Liberty, and *yielded* themselves absolutely
 into the *Snare of the Devil*, to be taken
captive by him at his Will. The Phrase
 is twice applied in the *Old Testament* to
Ahab ; 1 Kings xxi. 20, 25 ; that he *did*
sell himself to work Wickedness in the Sight
of the Lord. And twice, to the whole
 people of *Israel* ; in the days of *Hosea* ;
 2 Kings xvii. 17 ; that they *sold themselves*
to do evil in the Sight of the Lord ; and
 in the days of *Antiochus* ; 1 Macc. i. 15 ;
 that they *were sold to do mischief.*

A N D now if this be the Case of habi-
 tual Sinners ; we may well ask concern-
 ing *Liberty*, in the words wherein *Job*
 Job xxviii. put the Question concerning true *Wis-*
 12. *dom ; Where then shall Liberty be found ?*
and where is the place of True Freedom ?
 And the Answer may be returned in the
 Job xxviii. Words of the same excellent Author ; *Be-*
 28. *bold,*

bold, the Fear of the Lord, that is, Free- SERM.
dom ; and to depart from Evil, is True I.
Liberty. 

THE True Liberty of a Rational and Moral Agent, consists in his being able to follow *right Reason only*, without Hindrance or Restraint. It consists in a clear unbiaſſed Judgment, and in a Power of acting conformably thereunto. Man therefore is then *Free*, when his *Reason* is not awed by base *Fears*, nor bribed by foolish and fantaſtick *Hopes* ; when it is not tumultuously hurried away by *Lusts* and *Passions*, nor cheated and deluded by false Appearances of present *Good* ; but considers *impartially*, and judges *wisely*, and acts *effectually* and with Resolution. This is the Liberty of a rational Agent ; the Freedom of a Man, of a Christian, of an Angel. Not that in this present frail ſtate, we can ever actually arrive at ſuch a perfect Freedom ; but that by ſtudying and practiſing the Truth, the Truth of *Nature* and the Truth of *Religion*, we may and ought continually more and more to aſſert and improve our Freedom, till at length we arrive at the glorious Liberty of the children of God.

SERM. BUT here the profane Libertine will
I. ask, as before ; Is it not a greater Liberty,
for him to follow absolutely his own Pleasure, than to be under the direction of the Laws of right Reason and Religion ? I answer ; It is by no means so great a Liberty : For when a man follows *true Reason*, his Will is directed by its natural and proper Motive, which is a right Understanding ; But when he follows what he calls his *own Pleasure*, his Will is then directed by a false and unnatural Motive ; by *Errour and Prejudice*, by *Obstinacy and false Appearances of Things*. Now it is very evident, that what *Impotency or Bonds* are to the *natural Liberty* of the *Body*, that very same thing is *Ignorance or Passion* to the *moral Liberty* of the *Mind*. Wherefore as the Body is then free, when it is moved by the Natural Action of the Blood and Spirits, and not by the Convulsive Motions and Violence of a Disease ; so the Mind is then and then only Free, when its Choice is directed by the natural Motive of right Reason, and not by the violent impetus of a blind and headstrong Passion.

THIS Argument may further be illustrated in the following manner. God Himself is a Being, as of all other Perfections, so particularly of the most perfect and complete *Liberty*. Now *His Liberty* consists in this, that being infinitely *Knowing* and infinitely *Powerful*, 'tis impossible he should ever be influenced by any *Violence*, or by any *Deceit*; but his *Will* is always directed by *absolute Right and Reason only*: And This is what we vulgarly call, his being *Necessarily Just and Good*. Not that *Justice and Goodness* are *Necessary* in him by a physical, natural and immediate *Necessity*, exclusive of *Will and Choice*, in the same Sense as his *Omnipresence* or *Eternity* is *Necessary*; (For then it would be no more proper to return him *Thanks* for the Exercise of his *Justice and Goodness*, than for being *Eternal* or *Omnipresent*; Which is manifestly absurd.) But the meaning of his being *Necessarily Just and Good*, is This only; that the *Liberty* by which he always chooses what is eternally and absolutely right and good, can never possibly be infringed, no not in the least degree, by any Error or Passion, by any Violence or by

S E R M.
I.
~

S E R M. any Deceit. The Liberty of *Man*, therefore, consists proportionably in the very same things; in his being free from all those false Biasses and corrupt Inclinations, which would cause his Will to decline from the Direction of Right Reason. And where This Liberty is preserved by good men to any considerable degree of Perfection, there the Holy Ghost is pleased to express itself in such a manner even concerning *Them* also, as to affirm that they *cannot sin*; 1 Joh. iii. 9. Which expression is therefore so far from implying their having *no Liberty* of Will at all, as some have vainly imagined; that on the contrary, it signifies their having their *Liberty so perfect*, in Imitation of God, as (abating the unavoidable infirmities of human Nature) to be in *no danger* of being biassed or seduced. This is what our Saviour promises in the Text, that if men will continue in his Word, then they *shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make them free*. And it sufficiently makes good the general Doctrine I at first drew from the Words; namely, that the *Religious Restraints* laid upon men by the Gospel, are really and truly the *greatest Liberty*; and

John viii.
32.

and the Service of God, the most perfect Freedom. SERM.
I.

THERE are some other Senses in Scripture, of the Words *Liberty* and *Bondage*; which for the fuller understanding of the Text, in which they are directly or indirectly comprehended, deserve briefly to be mentioned in this Place.

And 1st, *CHRISTIAN Liberty*, in many places of Scripture, and principally in St. Paul's epistles, signifies deliverance from the Obligation of the Ceremonial law; from that Yoke, *which neither our Fathers, nor we, as it elsewhere expressed, were able to bear.* ACTS xv.
10. Of This it is that he speaks, when he tells us that we *have not received the Spirit of Bondage again, but the Spirit of Adoption*; that, *when we were children, we were in bondage under the Elements of the World*; Gal. iv. 3; that *the Lord is That Spirit*; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*; 2 Cor. iii. 17. ROM. viii.
15. The expression is difficult, and has been much misunderstood: But the meaning is, that the Gospel is the Spirit and End of the Law; and where the Spirit, or thing signified is fulfilled, there the type, or bare letter, is superseded,

S E R M. *The Lord is that Spirit ; and where the*

I. *Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. Of*

This also he is to be understood in those

Gal. ii. 4. *places, where he advises Christians to be-*

vi. 1. *ware of false brethren that would spie out*
their Liberty, and bring them again into

Gal. v. 13. *bondage ; to stand fast in the Liberty where-*

i Cor. viii. *with Christ had made them free, and not be*

9. *intangled again with the yoke of bondage ;*

not to use Liberty for an occasion to the

ix. 21. *Flesh ; to take heed lest by any means this*

Liberty of theirs, became a stumbling-block

to them that are weak : And accordingly

concerning himself he declares in this re-

spect, that To them that are without law,

he became as without Law, yet being not

without Law to God, but under the Law

to Christ. The meaning is, that though

men were delivered by Christ, from the

bondage of the ceremonial Law ; yet were

they by no means discharged from any

moral Obligations. And the same is the

intent of St. Peter's Exhortation, i Pet. ii.

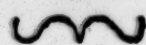
16. As free, and yet not using your Li-

berthy for a cloak of Maliciousness, but as

the Servants of God.

2dly. IN other places of Scripture, the
Freedom of Christians, signifies their De-

liverance from the Bondage of that *Fear*, which was the consequence of the Curse and Severity of the Law. Of the Wicked it is said, that they *flee, when no man pursueth*; and *are in great Fear, even where no Fear is*. Not that they have no just Cause of Fear; but on the contrary, because they have always so much reason to be afraid, that it often shows forth itself even upon *improper* occasions.

S E R M.
I.


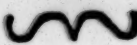
Prov.
xxviii. 1.
Ps. liii. 5.

BUT further; even with regard to those, who *are not* notoriously wicked; their being under the Law, is in general called the *Spirit of Bondage to Fear*, Rom. viii. 15. And their Deliverance from that Fear by the gracious Terms of the Gospel, is stiled *the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby they cry *Abba Father*; whereby they apply to God, not as to a strict and severe Judge, but as to a merciful and reconciled Father. And our Lord is said to have *delivered* them, Heb. ii. 15. *who through Fear of Death were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage*.

3dly. THE *Liberty* of a Christian, may also sometimes very properly signify, his Deliverance from the Slavery of endless *Superstition*. Of the Prophets of *Baal* it is

S E R M. recorded; 1 Kings xxviii. 28; that *they cried*
 I. *aloud, and cut themselves with knives and*
 ~~~~~ *lancets, till the Blood gushed out upon them:*  
 And of some other Idolaters; that they  
*caused their own Children, to pass through*  
*the Fire to Moloch.* Those among the  
 Heathen, who were less Cruel; yet were  
 in perpetual Fear, of *Dreams* and *Omens*,  
 and vain *Presages*; and in continual Bon-  
 dage to tedious and useless Observations.  
 The Corrupters of Christianity, have af-  
 ter the same Example, introduced an in-  
 tolerable Burden of Pilgrimages and Ab-  
 stinencies, and voluntary Humilities;  
 which *Who has required at their Hands?*  
 All which things, when a reasonable man  
 seriously considers, he may very properly  
 ask himself that Question, which *Naa-*  
*man's* servant put to his Master; 2 Kings v.  
 13; *If God had bidden thee do some great*  
*thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How*  
*much rather then, when he saith unto thee,*  
*Wash and be clean;* when he only saith  
 unto thee, Repent and amend.

BUT 4thly and lastly, That which it  
 chiefly and above all signifies in Scrip-  
 ture-phrases, is (what I have applied it  
 to in the foregoing discourse) *Free-*  
*dom*

dom from the Slavery of Sin. So the S E R M.  
 Apostle expressly ; Rom. vi. 18 ; Being L.  
 then made Free from Sin, ye became the   
 Servants of Righteousness ; Rom. viii. 2 ;  
 The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ  
 Jesus, has made me free from the law of  
 Sin and Death ; and ver. 21 ; delivered  
 from the bondage of Corruption, into the glo-  
 rious liberty of the children of God. Where  
 this Liberty is improved to any considera-  
 ble degree, the person is said to be *dead to*  
*Sin* ; in opposition to those who on the  
 contrary, for want of any improvement  
 at all, are represented as *dead in Sin*.  
 Rom. vi. 7 ; *He that is dead*, (or, as  
 it is explained by an easier Phrase in the  
 verse before, he in whom *the body of Sin*  
*is destroyed*,) is *free from Sin* ; and 1 Pet.  
 iv. 1. *He that has suffered in the Flesh*,  
 (*viz.* he that has conquered his corrupt  
 affections ;) *has ceased from Sin*. That  
 the Words, *suffered in the Flesh*, must in  
 this place be understood thus, not literally  
 but figuratively, appears evidently from  
 the following Words ; v. 2. *That he no*  
*longer should live the rest of his Time in*  
*the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men, but to the*  
*Will of God*. The highest improvement  
 and

S E R M. and perfection of this Liberty in the present Life, is, when a man not only obeys the Commands of God, but does it habitually with ease and pleasure; when the *Commandments* of God seem *not grievous* to him, but the *yoke* of Christ *easy*, and his *burden* light; when he can *delight to know* the *Ways* of God, and *call* his *Sabbaths* a *delight*; *Is.* lviii. 2, 13; when he can say with *Job*, ch. xxii. ver. 26; that he *has his delight in the Almighty*; with the Psalmist; *Pf.* i. 2; that *his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he exercise himself day and night*; and with our Saviour himself; *Job.* iv. 34. *My meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.* When *This* is the Case, which is the highest pitch of Christian Perfection upon Earth; then may it be said of such a Person, that he *continueth in the perfect Law of Liberty*, *Jam.* i. 25; ii. 12. Then may he cry out with the Psalmist, *Pf.* cxvi. 16; *O Lord, I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my Bonds in sunder; And I will walk at Liberty, for I seek thy commandments*; *Pf.* cxix. 45. Then is fulfilled That Prophecy, *Is.* lxi. 1; applied by our Saviour

*Pf.* cxix.

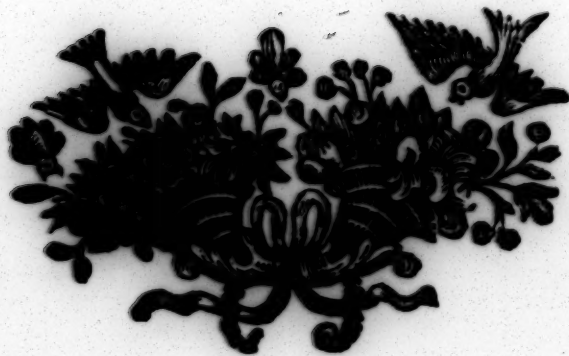
14, 16, 24,

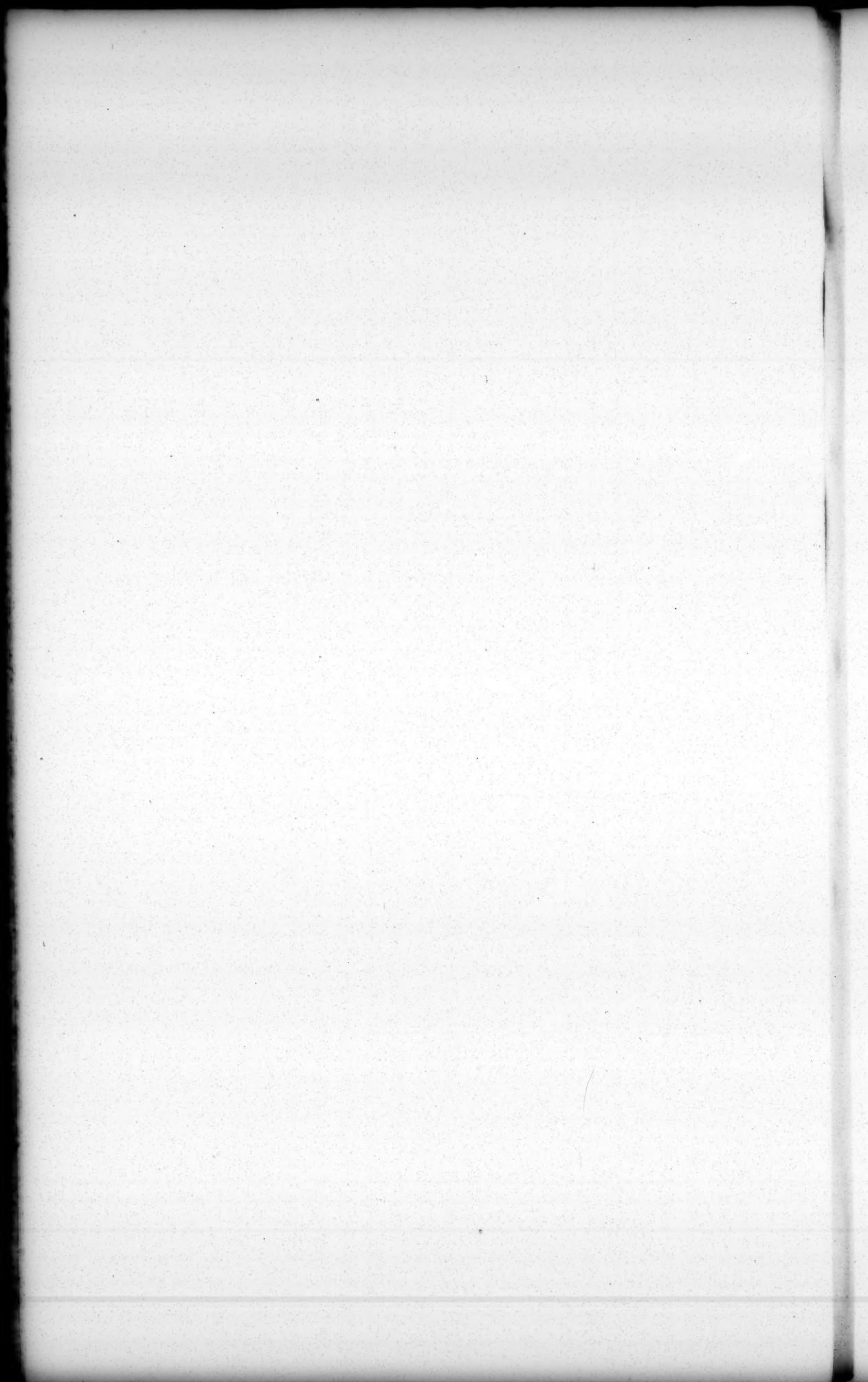
35, 47, 70,

77, 174.



Saviour to Himself, *Luke iv. 18* ; He has S E R M.  
*anointed me to preach the Gospel to the* I.  
*Poor,-----to preach deliverance to the cap-*  
*tives,-----to set at Liberty them that are*  
*bruised.* Lastly, of such a Person, who  
thus delights to do the Will of God, it  
may be declared, though he *be a Servant,*  
that *yet he is the Lord's free Man,* *1 Cor. vii.*  
*22* ; that because *the Son has made him*  
*free,* therefore *he is free indeed* ; *Jo. viii.*  
*36* ; or (as it is in the Words of the Text,)  
that *he knows the Truth, and the Truth*  
*doth make him Free.*

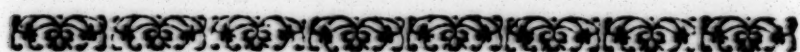






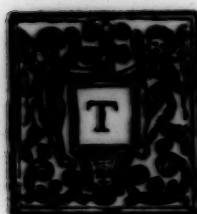
## S E R M O N II.

A Virtuous Mind the best Help to  
understand True Religion.



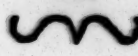
DAN. xii. 10. latter part.

*And none of the Wicked shall understand ; But the Wise shall understand.*



O seek a man's true and fi- S E R M.  
nal Interest, by parting with II.  
some present and inconsidera-  
ble Advantages for the sake  
of more and much greater ones to come,  
is the proper Act of *Wisdom* ; and the  
general Character of *Folly*, is the purcha-  
sing some trivial present Benefit, at the  
hazard



S E R M. hazard of much better and more valuable things in reversion. For This reason, in  
 II.  Scripture-phrafe, *Religion and Virtue* are almost always signified under the denomination of *Wisdom*; and *Folly*, is but another Name for *Sin*. The *Sinner* and the *Fool*, are always reciprocal Terms; and no man is stiled *Wise* by the Spirit of God, upon any other account than that of being *Religious*. For unto man he said; *The Fear of the Lord, That is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, is Understanding; Job xxviii. 28.* And This is so much the known language of Scripture, that I need in this place but just mention it. Thus *Eccles. ii. 13; Then I saw, says Solomon, that Wisdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darknes;* the Meaning is, that Religion and Virtue is *as much more* excellent and more profitable to men than Wickedness, as one thing can be preferable to another. And in the Words of the Text; *None of the Wicked shall understand: But the Wise, (those who are such in opposition to the Folly of Wickedness, that is, the Righteous) shall understand.*

*to understand True Religion.*

31

TO *Understand*, may be taken in two S E R M.  
Senses; Either to signify the understand- II.  
ing of these *particular* Prophecies; or  
the understanding the true nature of Re-  
ligion in *general*. In *Both* these Senses,  
the Words are very proper and emphati-  
cal; and in *Both*, they are very remarka-  
bly fulfilled. If we take them in the *for-*  
*mer* Sense; *None of the Wicked shall un-*  
*derstand*; i. e. none of them shall appre-  
hend the true meaning and intent of these  
Prophecies; *But the Wise, viz. the righte-*  
*ous* and well-disposed, the careful and dili-  
gent inquirers, *shall understand them*: If  
we take them, I say, in This Sense, then  
they were very remarkably fulfilled up-  
on the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; who,  
notwithstanding that this Prophecy of  
*Daniel* contained as clear a Prediction as  
could be desired, of the *Time* and *Manner*  
of our Saviour's appearing in the Flesh;  
yet through their obstinate prejudices a-  
gainst *Him* and his *doctrine*, they resolved  
*not to see* it: And because there were other  
passages in the Prophecy, more *obscure*,  
and *difficult* to be interpreted; therefore  
they would by no means be perswaded to  
understand what was *plain*. The like to  
which,

S E R M. which, has exactly happened among *Chri-*  
II. *stians* also. For whereas in the New Te-  
stament, there are very many Prophecies,  
and as express as can be ; of a Man of  
Sin to be revealed ; of a general Defec-  
tion and Apostacy in the latter times ; of  
a Worldly Power sitting in the Seat of  
God, and presuming to change Laws and  
Times, and compelling the *whole World*  
to worship him, by submitting to his arbi-  
trary and unreasonable Power ; and that  
the Head of this Corruption is that great  
City which ruleth over the Kingdoms  
of the Earth : yet because there are  
indeed other passages in the Prophetick  
part of the New Testament more ob-  
scure and difficult ; therefore those of the  
Church of *Rome*, and as many as favour  
their absurd pretensions, resolve they will  
not understand the clearest Descriptions  
of things ; but *will* continue to make  
Temporal Power, Riches and Grandour,  
a Mark or Note of the *True Church* ;  
when the Scripture on the contrary ex-  
pressly makes it a Mark of the *False* one,  
persecuting and scattering the true Wor-  
shippers of God.

BUT



BUT *secondly*; if we take the Words S E R M.  
of the Text in the *latter* sense, to express II.  
Men's Understanding, not of these *parti-*  
*lar* Prophecies, but of the true Nature  
of Religion *in general*; they are then evi-  
dently fulfilled in the greater part of Men.  
*None of the Wicked understand; But the*  
*Wise, that is, the Righteous, do under-*  
*stand.* And This being the most *general-*  
*ly useful* Sense of the Words, I shall in  
the following Discourse consider them  
according to *This* Interpretation. And  
so the Proposition they contain, is This:  
That a *virtuous Disposition of Mind* is  
the *best Help*, and a *vicious inclination*  
the *greatest Hindrance*, to a *right Under-*  
*standing of the Doctrine of True Religion.*  
*None of the Wicked shall understand; But*  
*the Wise shall understand.*

FOR the clearer Proof and Illustrating  
of which Proposition, it may be proper  
to consider distinctly the Two following  
particulars: 1<sup>st</sup>, What there is in the  
*Nature of Things themselves*; and 2<sup>dly</sup>,  
What there is in the positive *Appointment*  
of God; which makes a *virtuous Disposition*  
so great a *Help*, and a *vicious Inclination*

S E R M. fo great a *Hindrance*, to a *Right Under-*  
 II. *standing in Matters of Religion.*

IN the 1<sup>st</sup> place, there is something in the *Nature of Things themselves*, something in the very *Frame and Constitution of the Mind of Man*, something in the *Nature and Tendency of all Religious Truths*; which helps to verify the general Proposition. In a *Mind virtuously disposed*, there is a native *agreeableness* to the *Principles of True Religion*; in like manner as in a healthful *Body*, the *Organs* are fitted to their proper *Objects*; and as in the *Frame of the Material World*, every thing is suited and adjusted to its proper *Use and Employment*. A *well-disposed Mind* does as naturally entertain the great *Truths of Religion*, as the *Eye* discerns *Colours*, and the *Palate* relishes *Tastes*; or as *good Ground* receives *good Seed*, and feeds and nourishes it till it brings forth much *Fruit*. It is our *Saviour's own Comparison*, *St. Luke viii. 15.* *Those on the good ground are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth Fruit with Patience.* And in other places of *Scripture*, persons of such a disposition, are,

are, upon the same account, said to be, S E R M.  
not *ordained*, as we falsely render the II.  
Word, but *prepared* or *disposed* for eter- Acts xiii.  
*nal Life*; and that God daily added to his 48.

Church, not *such* as should be *saved*, Acts ii. 47.

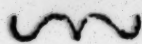
(though that also is true) but *such* as  
were *saved*, (so the original Word signi-  
fies;) namely, such as were beforehand  
*qualified and well inclined*, to save them-  
selves from a wicked generation, by em-  
bracing the Doctrine of the Gospel of  
Christ. Our Saviour elsewhere calls such  
Persons his *Sheep, that will bear his Voice*; Joh x. 27.

and says of them, that they are *Drawn* vi. 44.  
*by his Father*, before they come to Him;  
that is, that by a Love to the Truth of  
God *in general*, they are fitted to receive  
that Revelation of his Will, made by the  
Gospel *in particular*. In the Study of  
every *Humane* Science, there is some par-  
ticular previous Temper, some certain  
Predisposition of Mind, which makes  
men fit for that particular Study, and  
apt to understand it with Easiness and  
Delight: Generally and Principally, a  
*Love* to that particular Science, and a  
high Esteem of its Value and Usefulness.  
The same holds true in proportion, in



S E R M.

II.



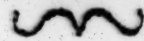
Religious Matters likewise. A general love of Virtue ; an equitable, fair, and charitable Spirit ; and a just Sense of the Necessity and Reasonableness of obeying God's Commands, is the first Principle and Beginning of Religion ; the best and great preparative to open the Understanding, to make men study with pleasure, and comprehend with Ease, and judge with right Discernment of Divine Truths. *The Fear of the Lord*, says the Psalmist, *is the Beginning of Wisdom : A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments ; The Praise thereof endureth for ever ;* Ps. cxi. 10. And Solomon, who in his Knowledge of the Workings of the Mind of Man, as well as in other Sciences, had no Superiour, lays down the same Maxim ; *Prov. i. 7 ; The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge ;* and repeats it again as the Foundation of all Instruction ; *ch. ix. ver. 10 ; The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom ; and the Knowledge of the Holy, is Understanding.* The Author of the Book of *Ecclus*, with the variation of One Word only, expresses likewise the same Sense ; *ch. i. ver. 14, 20 ; The Root of Wisdom, is to fear*

*fear the Lord.* The Root ; that is to say, S E R M.  
 the first Ground and Principle, the first II  
 Capacity and Disposition to receive Re-   
 ligious Truths ; that which makes the  
*Mind* susceptible and apt to apprehend  
 them ; that which makes *them* easy and  
 pleasant to be understood. *For Wisdom* Wis. vi.  
*goeth about, seeking such as are worthy of* 16, 17, 14.  
*her ; she sheweth herself favourably unto*  
*them in the Ways, and meeteth them in eve-*  
*ry thought : For the very true Beginning*  
*of her, is the Desire of Discipline----- And*  
*whofo seeketh her early, shall have no great*  
*travel, for he shall find her sitting at his*  
*Door.*

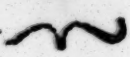
FURTHER ; as a *virtuous Disposition*  
*of Mind* is the best preparative for begin-  
 ning the Study of Religion ; so *Practice*  
*and Experience* in the course of a *Virtuous*  
*Life* and in the Obedience of God's Com-  
 mands, is in continuance the best *informa-*  
*tion* and perpetual improvement of a man's  
*Understanding and Judgment* in the Know-  
 ledge of Divine Truths. *He that keep-*  
*eth the Law of the Lord, getteth the Un-*  
*derstanding thereof,* says the wise Son of  
*Sirach ; and the perfection of the Fear of*  
*the Lord, is Wisdom ;* Ecclus. xxi. 11. *E-*

S E R M. *vil men understand not judgment ; but they*

II. *that seek the Lord, understand all things ;*

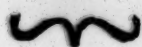
 Prov. xxviii. 5. He that practises what he knows, improves his Knowledge continually by that Practice ; and by Actions, even more than by Speculation and Study, is the understanding of practical Truths enlarged. In the common Affairs of the present Life, it is obvious that Men of Business, Experience and Diligence, are generally much better Judges in their proper Employments, than Others who for Parts and Learning may perhaps in other respects be esteemed much superiour. And so it is likewise in Matters of Religion. Not the Wise and Crafty, not the learned and profound, not the subtle Arguers in Speculation and Dispute, are the best Instructors in the Duty of a Christian ; but, in these matters, rather *the mouth of the Just, (says Solomon,) bringeth forth Wisdom, and the Lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable* ; Prov. x. 31, 32. There is a Spirit and a Life in the Discourse of a Righteous Man, proceeding from the Sincerity of an Upright Heart ; which no Skill nor Art can imitate. There is a Knowledge and Discernment arising from  
virtuous



virtuous Practice, which another man S E R M.  
cannot learn from him that has it, but II.  
by going himself and *doing likewise*. The   
Pure in Heart see God *here*, as well as  
*hereafter*, after *another* manner, than vi-  
tious and profane Philosophers argue  
about him. And as, with regard to  
*worldly* Employments, men of Parts and  
Learning can dispute and contend a-  
bout them, without understanding them;  
but Those only are truly skilful, who  
have exercised themselves in the *Practice*  
of the particular Employments: So in  
*Religion*, there is no man truly wise and  
knowing, but he that has *lived* like a  
Christian, instead of disputing about it.  
When some of the *Jews*, moved with the  
Wisdom and Excellency of our Saviour's  
Discourses, believed on him by a sudden  
Impulse of unexperienced Affection; our  
Saviour, knowing the Weakness of the  
Ground of their Faith, said unto them,  
*If ye continue in my Word, then---ye shall  
know the Truth, and the Truth shall make  
you free; St. Joh. viii. 31; free, from the  
slavery of unreasonable Lusts and Passions;  
free, from the Darkeness of Ignorance and  
Errours. The Wise shall understand.*

SERM.

II.



ON the contrary, in the Nature of *Vicious Inclinations*, and in the Practice of *all Wickedness*, there is something *necessarily repugnant*, something that in the *nature of things* will be a hindrance and impediment to a right Understanding in matters of Religion: *None of the Wicked shall understand. A vicious Disposition blinds mens Eyes, corrupts their Principles, and subverts their Judgment; it causes, that men have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not, Understandings and yet do not understand. They become vain in their Imaginations, as St. Paul expresseth it; Rom. i. 21: and their foolish heart is darkned. They have a reprobate mind; Rom. i. 28. The Word in the original signifies, an injudicious mind; a mind despoiled of its right Judgment, and of its natural Power of discerning. They have, as the same Apostle elsewhere elegantly describes them, their Understandings darkned, --- because of the Blindness of their Hearts. A Person in this state; the natural man, as St. Paul calls him; (so we render the Word; 1 Cor. ii. 14: but it ought to be translated, the Sensual man;) a man wholly taken up with the Cares and Pleasures*

Eph. iv.  
18.

*to understand True Religion.*

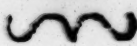
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of the present Life; such a one receiveth <sup>S</sup>ER M.  
not the things of the Spirit of God, he un- II.  
stands them not, has no relish of them;   
for they are foolishness unto him; neither  
can he know them, because they are spi-  
ritually discerned: spiritually discerned;  
i. e. discerned by Those only, who have  
Faculties to discern them with; by Those,  
whose Minds are not blinded with the  
Love of Wickedness. St. John gives us  
an emphatical Instance of This in one  
particular Vice, that of *Hatred and Ma-  
lice*; which whosoever is addicted to,  
he tells us is no more capable of un-  
derstanding the Doctrine of the Gospel,  
that Doctrine of Love and universal  
Charity, than a man whose Eyes are  
shut, is able to discern the Light: *He  
that hateth his Brother, is in darkness, and  
walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whi-  
ther he goeth, because that Darkness has  
blinded his Eyes*; 1 Joh. ii. 11. No Words  
can express in a more lively and empha-  
tical manner, than this Description does,  
the incredible stupidity of such Chri-  
stians as think they do God good Service  
by persecuting one another, and expect  
to propagate the peaceable and charitable  
Doctrine



S E R M. Doctrine of Jesus Christ by Arbitrariness,  
 II. Violence and Force. And the same may  
 be said, in proportion, of all *other* Vices ;  
 Whosoever is engaged in *Any* vitious habit, he is thereby made *blind*, and *walketh in Darknes*. Our Saviour represents to us the same thing, by another the like elegant similitude; comparing vitious men to persons that are *deaf* and *cannot hear* ; St. Joh. viii. 43 ; *Why do ye not understand my Speech ? even because ye cannot hear my Words ; For Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do.* The meaning of this difficult Text, by comparing it with that now cited from St. *John's* First Epistle, appears very evident. For here our Saviour in a very expressive manner describes the unfitness of the malicious *Pharisees* to receive his Doctrine, by saying that they were *deaf* and *could not hear his Words* ; just as St. *John* in the other place represents the incapacity of uncharitable men to understand the Gospel, by declaring that they are *blind* and *walk in Darknes*. And when This is the Case, (as it is too plainly the Case of most Wicked men,) it is no wonder if they run into unaccountable

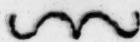
able Extravagancies. Hence, among the *Heathen*, those who *knew God*, yet *glorified him not as God*, but *changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and beasts and creeping things*; Rom. i. 21. Hence the *Jews in the Wilderness*, though they knew God not only by the *Light of Nature*, but by clear *Revelation* also; yet even *They* likewise so far corrupted themselves, as to *change their Glory, i. e. the True God*, whom *They* alone of all Nations upon the Face of the Earth had the Privilege more immediately to serve; even *They* changed this their *Glory, into the similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay*; Ps. cvi. 20. Hence the *Jews in our Saviour's time*, when they could not deny the Greatness of his Miracles, ascribed them to *Beelzebub the Prince of Devils*; and, after they had said, *Let him now come down from the Cross and we will believe him*, yet, after his Resurrection, which was a much greater Miracle, they still continued to disbelieve. Thus through *Blindness* it comes to pass, that *none of the Wicked do understand*.

S E R M.  
II.  


BUT

S E R M.

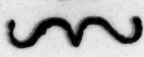
II.



BUT further: A Wicked disposition not only *blinds* men, and hinders them from considering, prevents their examining things, and causes them to overlook even the strongest Evidence; but it moreover *prejudices* them *Against* the Truth, and causes them even to *hate* it, and become professed *Enemies* to it. They hate *to be reformed*; and therefore *cast* God's words *behind* them; Ps. l. 17. Their *carnal mind* is even enmity *against* God; and therefore *is not subject* to the Law of God, *neither indeed can be*; Rom. viii. 7. A person that gives them the best Advice in the World, may come to be looked upon as their *Enemy*, for that very reason, *because he tells them the Truth*; Gal. iv. 16. They will knowingly chuse and love *Darkness* rather than *Light*, *because their deeds are evil*; St. Job. iii. 19. and reject the Truth for no other cause, but only because they *have* pleasure in *unrighteousness*; 2 Theff. ii. 12. And This is an effectual Reason indeed, why none of *such* wicked persons can *understand*. But where This is *not* the case, yet at least by any intervening worldly consideration, working upon their Ambition, Covetousness,

OR



or any other Passion; they will certainly S E R M.  
 be hindred from apprehending the Truth. II.  
 To the Question proposed; St. *Joh.* vii. 48;   
*Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees belie-*  
*ved on him?* the Answer is given; ch. xii.  
 ver. 43: *They loved the praise of Men,*  
*more than the Praise of God;* and ch. v.  
 ver. 44: *How can ye believe, which receive* 2 Cor. iii.  
*Honour one of another, and seek not the Ho-* 14.  
*nour which cometh from God only?* The  
 Jews, to this day, have the Veil remain-  
 ing upon their Heart, principally through  
 their expecting a temporal Messiah, to ex-  
 alt them in the splendor and glory of this  
 World: And it is too sad a Truth, that  
 one of the principal *Hindrances* of the  
*Reformation* of erroneous Doctrines and  
 Practices among Christians; such as *Tran-*  
*substantiation, Purgatory, Indulgences,*  
*Prayers for the Dead,* and the like; is  
 their being *profitable* to, and tending to  
 promote unreasonable and unjust *Power* in  
 those that maintain them. Where such  
 Worldly Interests and Passions interpose,  
 it is no wonder that Men understand not  
 the Force even of the strongest reason-  
 ing: *They are like the deaf Adder that*  
*stoppeth her Ear; which refuseth to bear*  
 the

S E R M. *the voice of the charmer, charm he never*

II. *so wisely ; Ps. lviii. 4. There is One thing further, and not so commonly taken notice of, by which an Evil Disposition hinders right Understanding in matters of Religion ; and That is, that it promotes contentious Disputes about needless Intricacies, for the sake of Pride, Vain-glory or Profit ; and in order to impose upon other mens Belief uncertain Opinions, which confound and darken the plainest*

Tit. iii. 9. *Truths. These St. Paul calls foolish questions----and contentions----which are un-*

2 Tim. ii. *profitable and vain ; striving about words*  
14. *to no profit, but to the subverting of the*

1 Tim. vi. *Hearers ; profane and vain babblings, and*

20. *oppositions of Science falsely so called, and*  
2 Tim. ii. *which will increase unto more ungodliness ;*  
16. *profane and old wives fables ; Fables and*

1 Tim. iv. *commandments of Men, that turn from the*  
7 *Truth ; foolish and unlearned questions, that*  
Tit. i. 14. *gender strifes ; Fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than*

2 Tim. ii. *godly edifying. And persons who by Heat*  
23. *and Dogmaticalness, and by Zeal for un-*  
1 Tim. i. 4. *certain Opinions without due inquiry and*

*examination, cause or promote such Contentions ; he calls proud, knowing nothing, but*

but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, rail-ings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that gain is Godliness; 1 Tim. vi. 4; and declares that they have a Form only of Godliness, but deny the Power thereof;-----resisting the Truth, being men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the Faith; 2 Tim. iii. 5, 8. Which natural Effects of Contentiousness and vain Disputes in order to impose upon each other our own Opinions, are probably in great part the true reason from whence it comes to pass, that *not many wise men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; 1 Cor. i. 26: Not many wise men after the Flesh; i. e. not many of those whom the World generally esteemed wise, for their being able by subtle disputes to perplex and make intricate even the plainest Truths; but the men of Integrity and Plainness, of Sincerity and Simplicity of Heart, men of fair and equitable Principles,*



S E R M. *ples, universally charitable and Lovers of*  
 II. *Mankind, These were the Persons that*  
 ~~~~~ *embraced the Gospel of Christ. And this*  
seems to be the Ground and Meaning of
that affectionate Thanksgiving of our Sa-
 1 Cor. iii *viour's; St. Matt. xi. 25: I thank thee, O*
 18. *Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, be-*
cause thou hast hid these things from the
Wise and Prudent, (that is, from the
Cunning or Crafty,) and hast revealed
them unto Babes; (to Men of unpreju-
diced Plainness and uncorrupt Integrity;)
Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in
thy sight: And of his declaring accordingly
to his Disciples; St. Luke xviii. 17; Verily
I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive
the Kingdom of God as a little Child, shall
in no wise enter therein.

AND thus much concerning the *first*
general Head, namely, what there is in
the Nature of Things Themselves, which
makes a vertuous Disposition so great a
Help, and a vicious Inclination so great a
Hindrance, to a right Understanding in
matters of Religion.

THE *second* thing to be considered,
 was, What there is moreover in the *po-*
sitive Appointment and Constitution of God,
 by

by which we are assured that *None of* S E R M.
the Wicked shall understand, but the Wise II.
 (in opposition to the Folly of Wick-
 edness, i. e. *the Righteous*) *shall under-*
stand. And here the Scripture declares,
1st, in general, that by some means or
other, by some or other Method of Pro-
vidence in the Government of the World,
God will take care, that righteous and
piously-disposed persons shall attain to so
much Understanding as is necessary for
their own particular Salvation: That the
Meek, God will guide in Judgement; and
such as are gentle, them he will teach his
way; Ps. xxv. 9. That God will give to
a man that is good in his sight, Wisdom,
and Knowledge, and Joy; Eccles. ii. 26.
That though Heaven is his Throne, and
Earth his Footstool, yet on such a one he
will vouchsafe to look, even on him that
is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trem-
bleth at his Word; Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. That if
any man will do his Will, he shall know
of the doctrine whether it be of God, St. Job.
vii. 17. And upon this are founded those
frequent exhortations in Scripture; Prov.
ii. 1, 5; My Son, if thou wilt receive my
Words, and hide my Commandments with
 V O L. III. E thee,

SERM. *thee;-----then shalt thou understand the*
 II. *fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge*
 of God;-----*For the Lord giveth Wisdom,*
 -----*he layeth up sound Wisdom for the*
Righteous. Again, Eccles. i. 26; If thou
desire Wisdom, keep the Commandments,
and the Lord shall give her unto thee; For
the Fear of the Lord is Wisdom and In-
struction, and Faith and Meekness are his
delight. St Jam. i. 5; If any of you lack
Wisdom, let him ask of God,-----and it
shall be given him: And Ephes. v. 14; A-
wake thou that sleepest, and arise from the
dead, (viz. from the Death of Sin,) and
Christ shall give thee Light. St. Paul him-
self was a great example of this Doctrine;
whom, because of the sincerity of his Zeal,
God was pleased to convert even by a
Miracle: For having been so imposed
upon as to think that Religion could be
propagated by Persecution and Violence,
he justly stiled himself the greatest of Sin-
ners. But yet for the sincerity of his
Intention, the pious Centurion Cornelius,
was instructed by an Angel sent from
Heaven; and the Ethiopian Eunuch was
taught by an Apostle sent to him on pur-
pose; And concerning all the Disciples,
 when

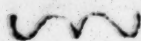
to understand True Religion.

51

when one of them asked our Lord, *How* S E R M.
is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to Us, II.
and not unto the World? He replied,
St Job. xiv. 23; *If a man love me, he will*
keep my Words, and my Father will love
him, and we will come unto him, and make
our abode with him.

But 2dly, T H E Scripture declares further in particular, that, by the *secret assistance of his Holy Spirit*, God will peculiarly direct and enlighten those that are truly sincere. 1 Job. ii. 20; *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.* Again, Acts v. 32;-----the Holy Ghost, which God has given to them that obey him:---the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit given first to the Apostles, and afterwards to all good men in proportion, to lead them into *all* (that is, into *all necessary*) Truth. And This, I suppose, is the meaning of those passages of Scripture: *The froward is an abomination to the Lord; but his Secret is with the righteous.* Prov. iii. 32. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his Covenant;* Ps. xxv. 14. And *Many are in high*
V O L. III. E 2 *places,*

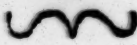
S E R M. *places, and of renown: but Mysteries are*
 II. *revealed unto the Meek; Ecclus. iii. 19.*



ON the contrary, where there is a *vi-
 cious Inclination* and an *Affection to Wic-
 edness*; there mens minds are not only
 blinded by the natural consequence of
 such a disposition, but God moreover
 withdraws his Spirit from them, and the
 Holy Ghost will not dwell in a Heart that
 takes pleasure in Unrighteousness. *For in-
 to a malicious Soul Wisdom shall not enter,
 nor dwell in the Body that is subject unto
 Sin; For the Holy Spirit of Discipline
 will flee deceit, and remove from Thoughts
 that are without Understanding, and will
 not abide when Unrighteousness cometh in;*
 Wisd. i. 4. Nay, not only so; but, where
 men are obstinately incorrigible, God is
 represented in Scripture as justly giving
 them up *in judgement to be deceived by the
 Evil One*, that for a deserved punishment
 they may increase unto more Ungodliness;
 Rev. xx. 8; Satan is described as being let
 loose, that he may go out to deceive the
 Nations: And the destruction of Wicked
 Abab, is thus eloquently represented in a
 most lively Image by the Prophet Mi-
 caiah,

caiah ; 1 Kings xxii. 19 ; *I saw the Lord* S E R M.
sitting on his throne, and all the host of II.
Heaven sitting by him on his right hand
and on his left. And the Lord said, Who
shall persuade, (in the original it is, Who
shall deceive) Ahab, that he may go up
and fall at Ramoth-Gilead ? and one said
on this manner, and another said on that
manner. And there came forth a Spirit,
and stood before the Lord, and said, I
will persuade him ; And the Lord said
unto him, Wherewith ? And he said, I will
go forth, and be a lying Spirit in the
mouth of all his Prophets ; And he said,
Thou shalt persuade him and prevail al-
so ; Go forth, and do so. The Represen-
tation is highly figurative, and by no
means to be understood literally ; But
the meaning is, that God justly permits
Wicked men when they obstinately re-
fuse to hear Him, he permits them to be
deceived by the Evil One to their own
destruction. The like expression is used ;
Judg. ix. 23 ; God sent an Evil Spirit be-
tween Abimelech and the men of Shechem :
The meaning is, as it is explained in the
following words, God permitted Abime-
lech to be deceived and dealt treacherously

SERM. *with* by the men of *Sbechem*, that his
 II. *cruelty* and the *blood* which he had shed
 might *come upon* him. 'Tis nothing more,
 but an acknowledgment of the Justice
 and Wisdom of Providence, in suffering
 Wicked men to be judicially blinded, that
 they may fall according to their deserts.
With him is Strength and Wisdom, the
Deceived and Deceiver are his;-----He
removeth away the Speech of the Trusty,
and taketh away the Understanding of the
Aged from them; Job xii. 16, 20. The
Heathen World, because they did not like
to retain God in their Knowledge, there-
fore God gave them up to Uncleaness,
and to vile affections, and to a reprobate
(i. e. an undiscerning) mind; Rom. i. 24,
26, 28. Josh. xi. 20. Deut. ii. 30. Pha-
raoh, because of his obstinate Wicked-
ness, God hardned his Heart, i. e. suffered
his understanding to be more and more
blinded, that he should not see the Ten-
dency of God's wonderful Judgements
worked in Egypt. The same Phrase is
used of the people of the Jews; Is. lxiii.
17; Thou hast hardned our Heart from
thy Fear; or, as it is, ch. vi. 10; Make
the Heart of this people fat,-----lest they
understand

understand with their Heart, and convert S E R M.
 and be healed. The Meaning is expressed II.
 at large; ch. xxix. 13, 10; Forasmuch as 
 this people draw near me with their mouth,
 -----but have removed their Heart far
 from me; Therefore, behold, I will pro-
 ceed to do a marvellous work among this
 people;-----The Wisdom of their Wise men
 shall perish, and the Understanding of their
 prudent men shall be hid;-----The Lord
 has poured out upon you the Spirit of deep
 sleep, and has closed your eyes. And Exek. Rom. xi.
 xiv. 5, 6, 9; Because they are all estranged 8.
 from me by their Idols, Therefore say
 unto the house of Israel,-----If a pro-
 phet be deceived when he has spoken a thing;
 I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and
 I will stretch out my hand upon him, and
 will destroy him from the midst of my peo-
 ple Israel. The like Expressions are used
 in the New Testament, concerning corrupt
 Christians; He that is unjust, let him be Rev. xxi.
 unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him 11.
 be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let
 him be righteous still; and he that is holy,
 let him be holy still. And God shall put it Rev. xvii.
 into their hearts to deliver their Kingdom 17.
 and Power unto the Beast. And 2 Thess.

S E R M. ii. 10; *Because they received not the Love of the Truth,-----for this cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye; That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness: And; 2 Tim. iii. 13; Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. All which passages, are as it were Paraphrases and Illustrations of the Words of the Text; None of the Wicked shall understand, but the Wise shall Understand.*

F R O M what has been said, we may infer, 1st, That *Wicked* men have no reason to complain, for their not being able to understand Religion; and *Infidels* no Excuse, for their not believing it. For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkneſs, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the light of the Knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ: But if our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost; In whom the God of this World has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them; 2 Cor. iv, 6, 3, 4.

2dly,

2dly, FROM hence appears the Reason S E R M.
II.
of our Saviour's speaking so much in Parables. To the *Wise* and well-disposed, it was given to know the *Mystery of the Kingdom of God*; but to others (*i. e.* to the *Wicked*) he spake in *Parables*, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand: And thence our Saviour so frequently at the end of his Parables cried out; *He that has Ears to hear, let him hear*; and, *He that can receive it, let him receive it*. And he that hath an Ear, let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

3dly, FROM what has been said, we may observe, how it comes to pass, that *Faith*, which is generally looked upon as an Act of the *Understanding*, and so not in our own Power, is yet in the *New Testament* always required and insisted upon as a *Moral Virtue*. The reason is, because *Faith*, in the Scripture-sense, is not barely an Act of the *Understanding*, but a mixt Act of the *Will* also; consisting very much in that *Simplicity and Unprejudicedness* of Mind which our Saviour calls *receiving the Kingdom of God*.

S E R M. *God as a little child*; in that freedom from *guile and deceit*, which was the character of *Nathaniel*, an *Israelite* indeed; and in that *teachable disposition* or *Desire to know the Will of God*, for which the *Bereans* were so highly commended, who *searched the Scriptures daily*, whether those things the Apostle taught, were so or not. They are commended for not believing on the *Authority* even of the Apostles. But

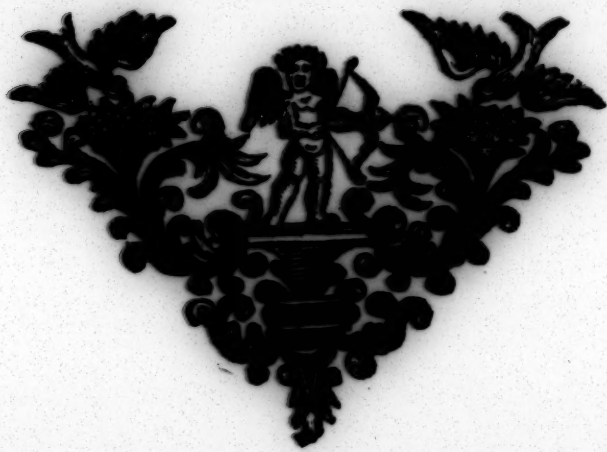
4thly, F R O M hence it appears, that there is no need of an *Infallible Guide on Earth*, or of an *unerring Church*. For all necessary Truth is sufficiently made known in Scripture; and one great part of our Christian Duty, is to *study* the Will of God with such a Disposition of Mind, as may entitle us to the Promise given in the Text, that *the Wise shall understand*.

5thly and Lastly, Y E T This must be so understood, as to be a Security, not against *All*, but against *Fatal Mistakes*. The best and piourest persons, may in many things *err*; but their *Errours* cannot be dangerous, or of final ill consequence:
For

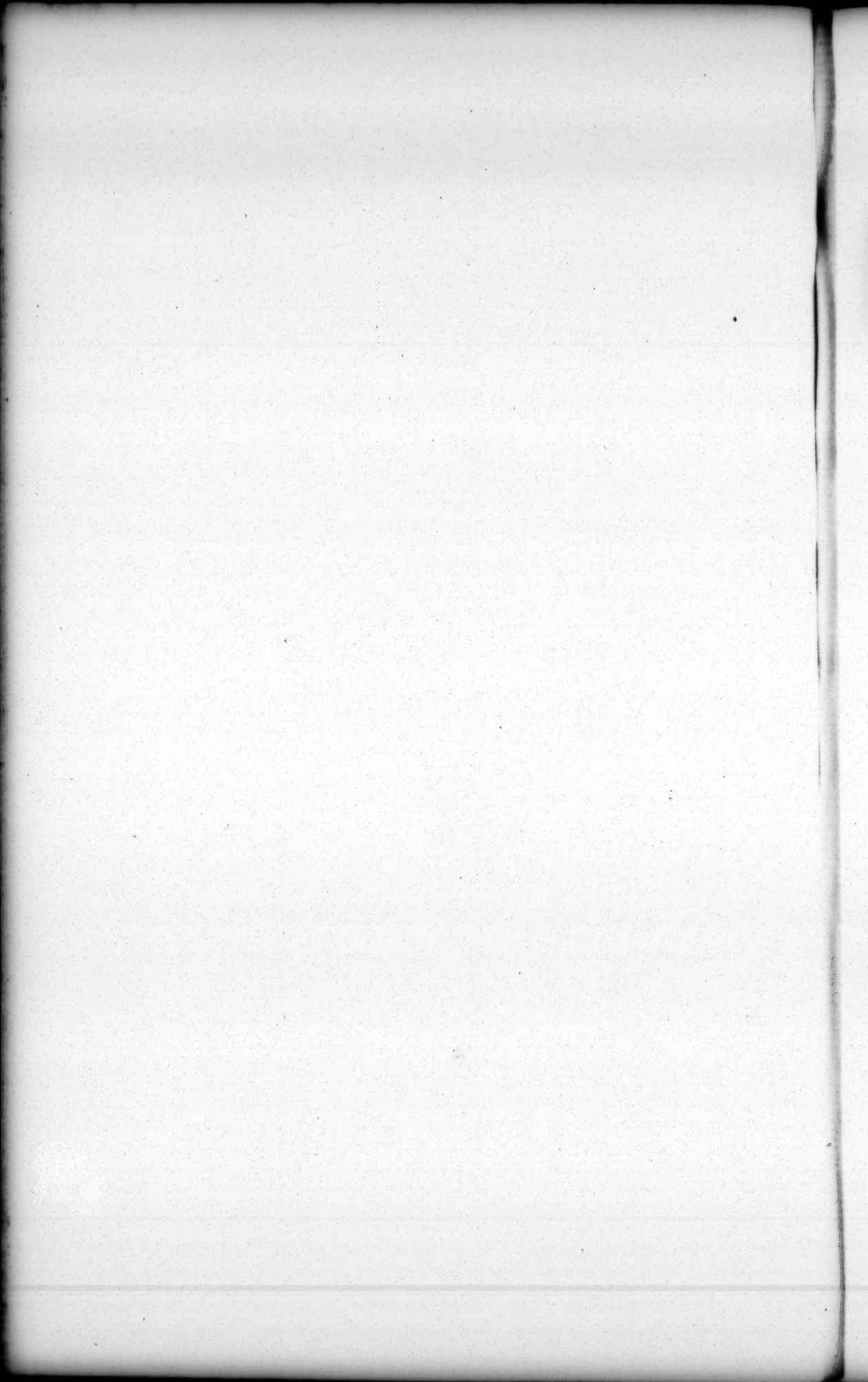
to understand True Religion.

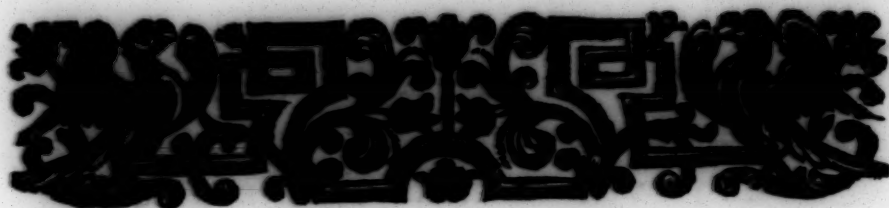
59

For in things absolutely necessary to Sal-SERM.
vation, the *Wicked* only can be void of II.
Understanding. *None of the Wicked shall*
understand; But the Wise shall under-
stand.



SERMON





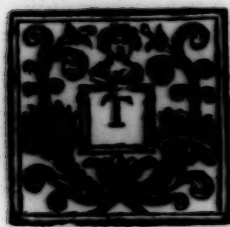
S E R M O N III.

The Practice of Morality leads to
the Practice of the Gospel.



J O H. vi. 44.

*No man can come to Me, except
the Father which has sent Me,
draw him.*



T H E *Duty and Happiness* of S E R M.
rational Creatures, is the III.
Practice of Righteousness and
true Virtue, founded upon a
Belief of the Being and Go-
vernment of God ; whose *Kingdom* over
rational Creatures consists, in the confor-
mity of their Wills and Actions to the
Nature

62 *The Practice of Morality leads*

S E R M. Nature and Life of God ; each in their
 III. several Stations, according to the Degree
 of Light and Knowledge which they in-
 joy, endeavouring to approve themselves
 to him by a chearful obedience to his
 Commands ; and constantly promoting the
 Great Ends of his Government by preserv-
 ing the Harmony of the *Moral* World,
 in like manner as the Wisdom of his Go-
 vernment over the *Natural and Material*
 World is shown forth in the regularity of
 all its Motions. By *Sin*, Moral Agents
 oppose and bring disorder into this King-
 dom of God ; which the inferiour part of
 the Creation, having no Liberty of
 Choice, is not capable of doing. And
 they who thus oppose God's Kingdom of
 righteousness, become thereby *Enemies*
 to God, and alienated from his Favour.
 Nevertheless, man being a frail and falli-
 ble Creature, liable to be seduced, tempt-
 ed and deceived ; and there being, in the
 case of most Sinners, many Circumstances
 to excite Pity and Compassion ; therefore
 Gods does not immediately cast them off,
 but generally allows them Space and Time
 for Repentance. And for this very End
 did he send his Son, our Lord Jesus
 Christ,

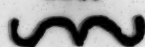
Christ, into the World ; that, inviting S E R M.
III.
men to Repentance, declaring to them more distinctly the Malignity of Sin, giving them the fullest Assurances of Pardon (upon their real and sincere Amendment) through the Merit of his own once offering himself a Sacrifice for ever, and revealing to them more clearly the Certainty of a future Judgement, and the Rewards and Punishments of the Life to come, he might by these means reduce them to the Obedience of God's Commands, and consequently restore them to the Divine Favour. *Christ has once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ; 1 Pet. iii. 18. And Col. i. 21 ; You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his Flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproueable in his Sight. But then we must here carefully observe, that in like manner as God originally and from the Beginning, while the inanimate world obeys him absolutely and by necessity of Nature, would not compel the Obedience of rational Creatures by the irresistibility*

64 *The Practice of Morality leads*

S E R M. nefs of his Power, but exacted it only
 III. from the willing Compliance of their
 own Choice ; so now likewise in the re-
 storation of men by *Christ*, he will have
 no one reduced to his obedience by *Force*,
 but by such Motives as work properly
 upon rational Agents, *Reason* and *Argu-
 ments*, *Promises* and *Threatnings*, *Hopes*
 and *Fears*. Thus in the Old Testament ;
I taught Ephraim to go, says God by the
 Prophet, *taking them by their arms*, but
they knew not that I healed them ; *I drew*
them with Cords of a man, with bands of
Love, and *I was to them as they that take*
off the yoke ; Hof. xi. 3 : And in the *Go-
 spel* ; *No man*, says our Saviour in the
 words of the Text, *can come to Me*, ex-
 cept the Father, which has sent me, draw
 him : No man can be a worthy Disciple
 of *Christ*, if he has not first upon his
 mind a due sense of God. No man can
 be a sincere Follower of the Son of God,
 who is not in a disposition of being drawn
 to a Love of Virtue, and of being pre-
 vailed upon to practise Righteousness, by a
 Sense of the Goodness and Reasonableness
 and Excellency of the eternal Laws of
 God, even the Father, who sent him.

F O R

FOR the clearer and more distinct ex-
plication of which doctrine, and of our
Lord's full Meaning and Intention in these
words; it will be proper to consider par-
ticularly,

S E R M.
III.


First, WHAT is meant by the Phrase
of *Coming to Christ*: No Man can Come to
Me, except the Father which has sent
me draw him. Some enthusiastick persons,
judging of the Sense of this Phrase merely
from the conceptions of their own imagi-
nation, and not from its Use and clear
Signification in other passages of the same
Writings; (which indeed is the only pos-
sible way of Understanding the true mean-
ing either of Scripture, or of any book
whatsoever :) and Others negligently fol-
lowing Their Interpretation, have sup-
posed that *Coming to Christ* means a rely-
ing or depending upon His Merits and
Satisfaction, to bring them to Salvation,
whether they obey his Commandments by
a virtuous Course of Life, or no. But
whoever considers the many Passages of
Scripture, in which this expression is to
be met with, cannot fail to observe, that
it really signifies quite another thing;
Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh to God, must

S E R M. *believe that he Is, and that he is a Rewarder*
 III. *of them that diligently seek him : Coming*
 ~~~~~ *to God here evidently expresse the same*  
*thing, as diligently seeking him : And, dili-*  
*gently seeking him, is the same as sincerely*  
*desiring to know and obey his Will, in order*  
*to please him. Again, ch. vii. 25. Christ is*  
*able to save to the uttermost them that come*  
*unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to*  
*make intercession for them : Coming unto God*  
*by Christ, is, Sinners returning by Repen-*  
*tance and Real Amendment to the Obedi-*  
*ence of God's Commands, in hopes of ob-*  
*taining pardon for what is past, through*  
*the intercession of Christ. In like man-*  
*ner therefore, Coming unto Christ, signifies*  
*also serving and obeying Him, becoming*  
*his Disciples, believing his doctrine, and*  
*living according to it, sincerely desiring to*  
*understand and practise his Will ; Joh. vi.*  
*35 : He that cometh to me, shall never*  
*hunger ; he that believes and obeys the*  
*Gospel, shall never want any thing ne-*  
*cessary towards his obtaining eternal Life.*  
*And thus likewise in the words of the*  
*Text ; No man can come to Me, No*  
*Man can be a worthy disciple of Christ,*  
*no Man can be a true and sincere Chri-*  
*stian ;*

stian ; *except the Father which has sent me*, SERM.  
*draw him.* And This is the **III.**

*Second* thing to be considered in the Text ;  
the meaning of these *latter* words, *except the Father, which has sent me, draw him.*  
Which expression, many Writers in Divinity have so understood, as if thereby was signified, that no man had it in his own Power to become a good Christian, or to perform any good Action ; but that every Act of Virtue, was operated or produced in him by the immediate Power of God. And thus much of Truth there *is* indeed in That Notion ; that neither in any *religious*, nor in any *natural* action, does any one perform any thing, but by a Power freely given him from, and entirely depending upon, the good pleasure of God. *In Him*, and by virtue of Powers and Faculties continually depending *upon* him, we *live and move, and have our Being*, and perform all, even the *natural* Actions of Life. In the execution of Civil Power and Authority, or of any *Office* whatsoever, there is still further, not only a continual dependance upon the Will of God for the use of men's *natural Faculties* ; but moreover a dependance upon God's general Providence in

S E R M. the Government of the World, to order  
 III. things so, as that the *Authority*, whatever it is, may actually take place : Thus *Pilate* could have had *no Power* to judge or condemn our Lord, or any other person, except it were *given him from above* ; Joh. xix. 11. And the *Baptist* in This sense well expresses the *Success* of his Own Ministry, *A man can receive nothing*, says he ; Job. iii. 27 ; *except it be given him from Heaven*. In religious matters still further, it is *not only* true, that it is *God who giveth us both to will and to do of his good pleasure* ; that it is God from whom alone we receive the *rational Faculties*, or *Powers*, both of *choosing* and *acting* ; but *moreover*, that it is owing to his *superabundant grace and favour*, to his *free Gift and undeserved Bounty in Christ*, that he has afforded us the *Benefit* of a *Revelation*, the *Advantage* of a clearer and more *express* declaration of his *Will*, the *Assistances* of his *Holy Spirit*, an *Authoritative Assurance* of *Pardon* upon *Repentance*, and a more *complete Discovery* of the *Rewards* and *Punishments* in the *future State*, than could be obtained by the bare *Light of Nature*. All This, I say,



say, is unquestionably true ; and ought to be continually and thankfully acknowledged, with a just and humble sense of our Dependence upon God in every thing that we Are, or Do. But it is *not* the Meaning of the *Text* before us, nor what our Saviour is at all here speaking of in this whole Discourse. For where any one is exhorting men to *act*, and pressing them to *perform their Duty* ; it is not *there* a *proper Argument or Incitement to Diligence*, (though it is undoubtedly in itself a certain Truth,) to tell them they can do nothing at all, unless God give them Power ; but the *proper Motive* is to assure them, that because God *has* actually given them *Power*, therefore he *expects* and *requires* it of them, that they should *act* accordingly. Thus St. Paul argues to the *Philippians* ; ch. ii. 12. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling ; For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.* The meaning plainly is ; God *has* given you Power to chuse and *act*, *therefore* work out your own Salvation. And for the same reason, when our Saviour, in the *Text*, tells the unbelieving *Jews*, by

S E R M.  
III.  
~

S E R M. way of *Reproof* for their obstinate Infidelity, and not by way of *pitying* them for any Want of Power to do their Duty; when he tells them (I say) by way of *Reproof* for their unreasonable Infidelity, that *no man can come to Him, except the Father draw him*; it is very certain he does not by these words mean to express any *Act* of God upon *Them*, but some certain *affection* or *disposition* of *Theirs* with regard to God.

F O R the further clearing of which explication of our Lord's sense, it is to be observed in the general nature of language, that when *Any Person* or *Thing* is said to *draw* another, the word (*draw*) may with equal propriety of Speech, signify either the *Action* of *Him* who *draws* the Other, or the *Action* of the *Other* who is *drawn* by him. And that, both in Scripture and in vulgar language, it *much more frequently* signifies the *Action* of *Him* who is *drawn*, than of *Him* who *draws*, will appear most evidently, and beyond All contradiction, from the following considerations. Our Saviour discoursing with the *Jews*; *Job. xii. 32.* *And I, says he, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw*

draw *all men unto me*: His meaning clearly is, not to express any *Act* of *his Own* upon Men; but that, after his crucifixion, many nations and people, convinced by the Excellency of his doctrine, and by the Miracles it was attended with, should by *their own Will and Act* embrace his Religion. In like manner when God by the Prophet declared concerning the *Israelites* of old; *Jer. xxxi. 3. With loving Kindness have I drawn thee*; and *Hos. xi. 4. I drew them with Cords of a man, with Bands of Love*; every one sees the Meaning to be This only, that the consideration of the kindness and love of God, shown forth to the *Israelites* in so many eminent Instances of Mercy, was a very strong reason to prevail with them to obey and serve him cheerfully. The sense is the very same, as in that of *St. Paul*; *2 Cor. v. 14; The Love of Christ constraineth us*; which is a stronger expression than that of *drawing us*: *The Love of Christ*, says he, *constrains or compels us, ----- that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again. A sense of Gratitude, draws Us; Acts of Kindness, Love and*

S E R M.  
III.



S E R M. *Good-will, from One Person to another, do*  
 III. *very strongly draw men; The Beauty and*  
*Excellency, the Goodness and usefulness of*  
*Things, draws or perswades them: We*  
*are drawn, by Arguments and Reasons, by*  
*Promises and Threatnings, by Hopes and*  
*Fears; Yet it is not that these things are*  
*Agents, but that we ourselves act, when*  
*we are said to be drawn by them. Much*  
*after the same manner of speaking, Men*  
*are said to be moved (or drawn) with*  
*compassion; Matt. ix. 36: moved with in-*  
*dignation; Matt. xx. 24: moved with En-*  
*vy; Acts vii. 9: moved with Fear; Heb. xi.*  
*7. And when St. Paul had reckoned up*  
*the things which are generally apt to af-*  
*fect Men most strongly, yet None of these*  
*things (says he) move Me; Acts xx. 24.*  
*After the same manner, in the Ill sense of*  
*the word, Men are described to be drawn*  
*away with their own Lust, and enticed;*  
*Jam. i. 14: and David is represented as*  
*having been moved by Satan to number*  
*the people; 2 Sam. 24. 1. And yet nei-*  
*ther the one nor the other expression were*  
*at all intended to signify, that the things*  
*done were not the persons Own Acts. Di-*  
*rectly on the contrary, the Scripture*  
 plainly

plainly means, severely to *blame* the One, S E R M.  
*acting* upon the incitement of *Lust*; and the III.  
 Other, for *acting* upon the Suggestions of  
 the *Devil*. Thus therefore in the *Text*  
 likewise, when our Lord says, *No man*  
*can come to Me, except the Father, which*  
*has sent me, draw him*; it is reasonable and  
 necessary to understand him as speaking,  
 not concerning any *Act* of God upon men,  
 but concerning the *Affection* which *Some*  
*men* bear towards God. For as it is not a  
*misfortune*, but a *Vice*, for a Man to be  
*drawn away* by his own *Lust*, and enticed;  
 and St. Peter's expostulation with *Ananias*,  
*Why hath Satan filled thine heart*, is not by  
 way of *Excuse*, but by way of *aggravating*  
 his crime: So neither on the *other* side, is  
 it any declaration of *Fate*, but a high com-  
 mendation of Men's *Virtue*, to say that they  
 were *drawn* to their Duty, or prevailed with  
 to perform it, by consideration of God. In-  
 deed, *without* consideration of God, without  
 a continual *View* and *Regard* towards Him,  
 as Governing the World, there *can* be no  
 such thing as *True Virtue*: No man *can*  
 become a *true and good Christian*, without  
 first having a Sense of the original *natu-*  
*ral* obligation he lies under, of *Love and*  
*Duty*

S E R M. *Duty towards God: No man can come to Me, except the Father, who has sent me, draw him. And This sense of the phrase, our Saviour himself confirms by the words immediately following: For so he expressly adds in the very next verse; Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me; Every one that has a just sense, and suitable Practice, of natural Religion towards God; will be disposed readily to embrace the Doctrine of Christ.*

T H E R E is *another* expression very frequent in Scripture, which may help much to illustrate the manner of speaking in the Text. The same Disciples of Christ, who are here said to be *drawn* to him by the Father, are elsewhere frequently described as being *given* to him of God; *Heb. ii. 13; I, and the children whom God has given me. And again; Job. xvii. 2; Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* Now that even *This phrase* does not denote any *Action* of God upon men, but merely the *character* or *qualifications* of the persons described; is apparent from the



the *parallel* places of Scripture. *All that* S E R M.  
*the Father* giveth me; Joh. vi. 37, are, in III.  
the 40th verse; *every one which seeth the*  
*Son, and believeth on him:* And they to  
whom it is not given of the Father to come  
to Christ; ver. 65. are they whom, in  
the verse before, our Lord reproves for  
their *unreasonable obstinacy in not belie-*  
*ving.* And when in his Prayer to the  
Father; ch. xvii. 12, he says, *those that*  
*thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of*  
*them is lost, but the Son of perdition;* it is  
plain by That exception, that Judas was  
originally one of those, whom God had  
given to Christ, in the same sense as he  
gave him the rest of his Disciples; and  
yet afterwards, by his own Fault, by be-  
coming a Son of Treachery, *i. e.* a wick-  
ed and traitorous person, he ceased to be  
of that number. Just as, in Acts xxvii.  
24; God had given to St. Paul all those  
that sailed with him; and yet he declares,  
ver. 31; *Except these abide in the ship, ye*  
*cannot be saved.*

By a not much unlike figure of Speech,  
such persons as *voluntarily* undertake ex-  
traordinary Difficulties for the Kingdom  
of Heaven's sake; Matt. xix. 12; are, in  
these

S E R M. the verse before, stiled *those to whom it is*  
 III. given. And, *It is given unto you*, says our  
 Lord to his Disciples; *ch. xiii. 11; to*  
*know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Hea-*  
*ven; because seeing, ye see; (that is, ye*  
*see without Prejudice;) and hearing, ye*  
*bear and understand; ver. 13. And con-*  
*cerning those of a contrary Disposition, the*  
*Scripture says that they are blinded; that*  
*God hath given them eyes that they should*  
*not see, and ears that they should not bear;*  
*nay, that God sends them strong Delusion.*  
 And *Moses*, in a most affectionate man-  
 ner of expostulation, complains of the  
*Israelites; Deut. xxix. 4; that after all the*  
*Great things that their eyes had seen, the*  
*Signs of those Great Miracles, yet the*  
*Lord had not given them an heart to per-*  
*ceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear,*  
*even unto That day.* Nothing is more  
 evident, than that the meaning of these  
 Complaints is, not that *God* was wanting  
 in his assistance, much less that he actu-  
 ally operated upon men to make them stu-  
 pidly and ungratefully wicked; but that,  
 through their own Obstinacy and Per-  
 verseness, the Means which *God* had been  
 pleased to make use of to reclaim them,  
 had

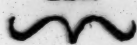
had always proved ineffectual; and all the great and marvellous things which he had done for them in *Egypt* and in the Wilderness, had not prevailed with them to repent, had not *drawn* them (as our Saviour in the Text expresses it) to the Obedience expected of them. And the same thing may in the like sense too justly be said at this day, concerning many among *Us*. God has by a long series of very marvellous Events delivered *Us* from That greatest of All Temporal calamities, the establishment of Popery and Arbitrary Power, by which Other Great and (in other respects) Wise nations have been reduced under the vilest Indignities of the most irrational and inhuman Slavery: And yet *the Lord hath not given us an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, even unto This day.*

FROM what has been said in explication of the phrases made use of in the Text, the general *Doctrine* it contains is plainly this; that no man can *become* a true Disciple of *Christ*, who is not affected with a sincere Love of *God and Virtue*; Nor can any one who *already professes* the Name of *Christ*, behave himself



S E R M. self as becomes that Holy Profession, by

III.



Any other Methods or Forms of Religion whatsoever, than by the Practice of Righteousness and true Virtue, in Obedience to the moral Commands of God. When our Saviour had worked the Miracle of the Loaves, recorded in the Beginning of This chapter; many of the *Jews* believed on him; that is, they professed themselves his Disciples, not out of any regard to the Excellency and Holiness of his Doctrine, but in hopes of being supported by him in the World. To these persons he says, ver. 26; *Ye seek me, not because ye saw the Miracles, but because ye did eat of the Loaves, and were filled: Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for That meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* This Doctrine when they relished not, but began to *murmur*; he reproves them with somewhat *more earnestness* in the words of the Text; *No man can come to Me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him:* It is in vain to profess to be my Disciples upon any other foot, than that of Regard to *God*, and to *the World to come*. Upon which when they murmured still more, ver. 61; he replied again,

again, ver. 64, *There are some of you that believe not ;-----therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to Me, except it were given unto him of my Father : Given unto him of my Father ; that is, in the same sense, as he elsewhere tells the Apostles that it was given to them to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, because they were unprejudiced, willing to bear and to understand ; and came to him, not upon any temporal Design, but being perswaded (as St. Peter expresses himself ; ver. 68 of this chapter) that he had the words of eternal Life.*

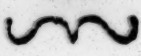
UPON account of the necessary and inseparable connexion of *these Two* things ; of a steady *Regard* to the *eternal* obligations of the *moral law* of God, in every one who professes to embrace the *Revelation* of Christ ; upon This account (I say) it is, that our Lord declares, *Job. vii. 16, 17. My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me ; If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* And again, *ch. viii. 42 ; If God, says he, were your Father, ye would love Me ; for I proceeded forth and came from God ;*

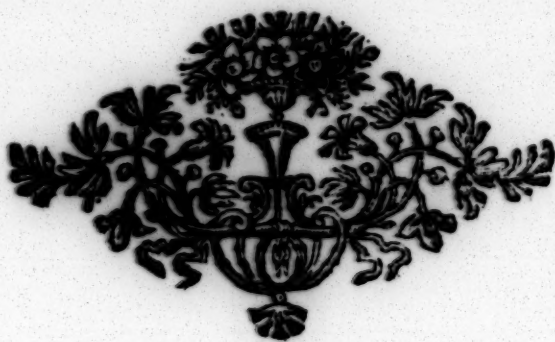
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III.  
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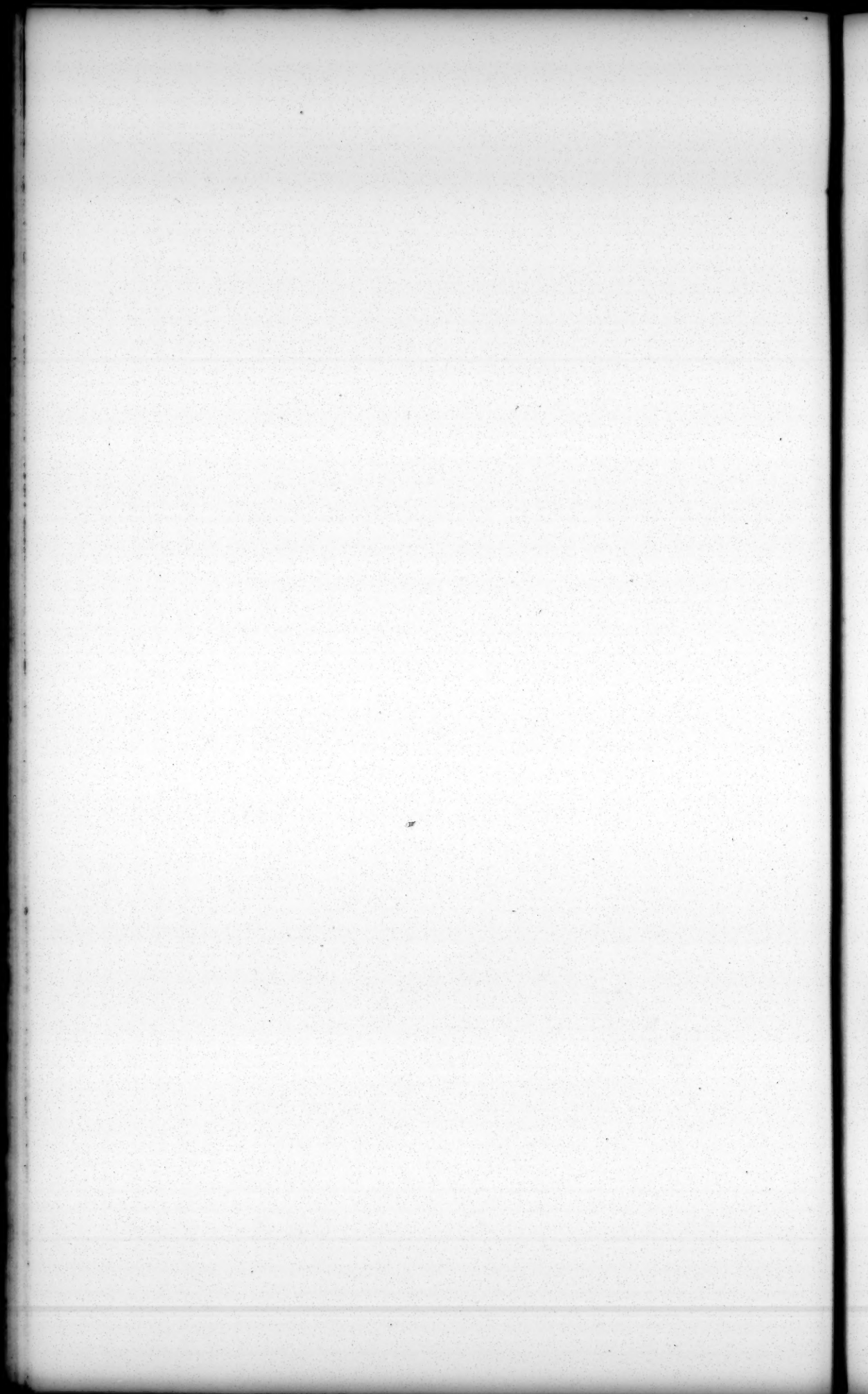
S E R M. God ; *neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* Like to which, is that of the Apostle St. John ; 1 Joh. ii. 13 ; *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father ; ver. 24 ; If that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.* 2 Joh. 9 ; *He that abideth in the doctrine, (that is, he that obeys the Laws) of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.* On the contrary, to the immoral and hypocritical Pharisees, who hated the doctrine of Virtue and Righteousness ; *Ye neither know me, says our Lord, nor my Father ; Joh. viii. 19.* And, speaking of the persecutions which the vicious and debauched World would bring upon his disciples ; *These things, says he, will they do unto you, because they know not him that sent me ; Joh. xv. 21. They have both seen and hated both Me and my Father ; ver. 24. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me ; ch. xvi. 3.* that is, they have no true Sense, either of *natural Religion, or revealed.*

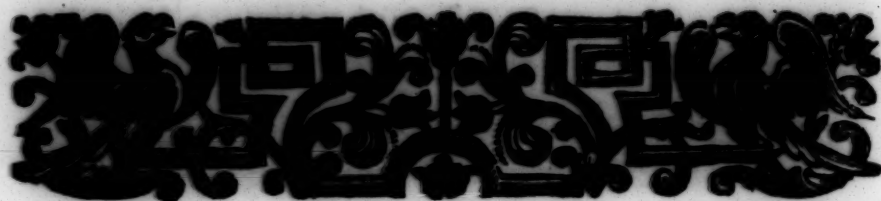
THE Sum therefore and application of the Whole, is This : The Great End and Design



Design of the Gospel of Christ, is to re-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
store Sinners to the Favour of God, by <sup>III.</sup>  
bringing them back to the Practice of   
*True Virtue*. Vicious and corrupt Minds  
therefore, who are enemies to the *Moral*  
*Laws* of God, *must* always naturally be  
averse to the Doctrine of the *Gospel*.  
Consequently such persons are very apt,  
either to oppose and persecute the true  
Disciples of Christ; or else, if in times  
of Prosperity they themselves embrace  
the Profession of Christianity, they always  
place their Religion in outward Forms  
and Ceremonies, or in certain Systems of  
opinion, consistent with unrighteous pra-  
ctice. For to a True Sense of Christ's  
Religion *no man can come, except the Fa-  
ther draw him*, that is, except the love  
of God and Virtue be his Motive.







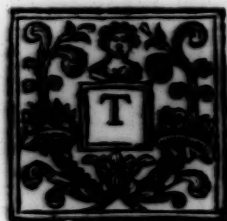
# S E R M O N IV.

The Character of a Good Man.



G E N. xviii. 19.

*For I know Him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgement.*



THESE words are part of the S E R M. IV. character, which God himself, in different places of the Old Testament, has given of that Great and Good Man, the Patriarch *Abraham*. And they

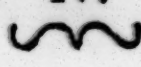


S E R M.

IV.

are spoken in this place, as a ground or reason of the great and lasting Blessings which God declared he intended to confer upon him. Ver. 18; *Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in Him: For I know Him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him.* Upon account of This character, and the Blessings consequent upon it, he is elsewhere stiled in Scripture *The Friend of God*, and the *Father of all them that believe*. And in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*; ch. xliv. 19; his history is thus briefly and elegantly summed up: *Abraham was a great Father of many people, in glory was there none like unto him: Who kept the Law of the most High, and was in covenant with him; he established the Covenant in his flesh, and, when he was proved, he was found faithful: Therefore he assured him by an Oath, that he would bless the nations in his Seed, and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and*  
exalt

*The Character of a Good Man.* 85

*exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost part of the Land.* S E R M. IV. 

T H E *Virtues*, upon account whereof these great Blessings were promised to *Abraham*, were *personal*: But the *Blessings themselves*, 'tis evident, were, with regard to *Him*, *figurative* only; being fulfilled not till some *hundreds* of years after, upon his *Posterity*; whereas *He* himself did but sojourn in the land of *Promise*, as in a *strange country*, and confessed that he was a *Stranger and Pilgrim* on the *Earth*. From whence the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* very justly infers, That *Abraham* understood the promised Blessing, with regard to *Himself*, to be of a *spiritual* and *better kind*. Ch. xi. 14, 16, 10; *For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country; a better country, that is, an heavenly; For he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.*

T H E *particular* *Virtue* which procured to *Abraham* the character given him in my *Text*, was his *keeping the way of the Lord*, that is, his adhering to the *Belief* and *Worship* of the *One True God* of the  
G 3 *Universe,*

S E R M.

IV.



*Universe*, in opposition to the general corruption of the idolatrous Nations among whom he lived; and his *commanding his children and his household after him*, to do the like. 'Twas his exemplarily putting in Practice, what *Joshua* publicly declared before all the tribes of *Israel*, that *He* also would do in the like case: Ch. xxvi. 15; *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the Gods which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the Gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: But as for Me and my House, we will serve the Lord.* In the *New Testament*, This practice is stiled, [*νικᾶν ἐκ τοῦ θηέρος*,] Rev. xv. 2; not (as we render the words,) *getting the victory over the Beast*; but, *getting the victory (or overcoming) from out of the midst of the Beast*; That is, adhering stedfastly to the *True Religion*, in the *midst* of idolatrous and corrupt Nations.

THE Great and Principal Design of every man's life, ought to be the promoting the Glory of God; the encouraging of Virtue, and discouraging every kind of Vice. Not that any man is obliged to be perpetually

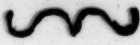


usually employed in actions that are *im-* S E R M.  
*mediately* of a religious nature; or that VI.  
all his Thoughts and Discourses are to be  
wholly confined to things *Sacred*: But  
that his Principal and Final Aim, his Ge-  
neral and Constant View, the settled  
Temper and Disposition of his mind, and  
the Habitual Tendency of all his Actions,  
be the establishing of Truth and Right in  
the World. And when once a man has  
habitually fixt to himself this Great End,  
and it is become (as it were) his Natural  
Temper; When he is *transformed* (as  
St Paul expresses it) *by the renewing of*  
*his Mind*, and his *Meat and Drink* (as  
our Saviour speaks concerning himself) is  
to *do the Will of his Father which is in*  
*Heaven*: This Love of Goodness, will  
naturally, like all *Other Habits*, influence  
even the most *common* actions of his life:  
Even when he is not actually thinking of  
it, but employed perhaps in the most  
*vulgar* affairs, or even in *diversions them-*  
*selves*; yet still *every thing* he does, will  
habitually have somewhat in it, tending  
to promote a general sense of Truth and  
Equity, a general Regard to God and  
Virtue. And *whatever* his *particular*

S E R M. State, Relation, or Circumstances of Life  
 IV. be ; he will particularly apply the proper  
 Advantages and Opportunities, wherewith  
 That State or Those Circumstances more  
 peculiarly furnish him, to promote the  
 same Ends of Virtue and Goodness.

As a *Magistrate* or *Governour*, he will  
 take care that That Weight, and Power  
 of *influencing* Others, which the Superi-  
 ority of his Station gives to his *Example*,  
 shall be directed constantly to the Interest  
 of Virtue. In the *execution* of *Laws*,  
 (in which matter there is room for great  
 variety of Prudent or Imprudent exercise  
 of Power,) he will always endeavour to  
 put the *Stress* of Authority, upon urging  
 men to *do* those things which will really  
 make them *better*, and *detering* them from  
 such Practices as are intrinsically in their  
 own nature *evil* or *vicious* ; That so the  
 Laws of *God* and *Man* may uniformly  
 promote one and the same End, *for the*  
*Punishment only of Evil doers, and for*  
*the Praise of them that do well* : And with  
 regard to *Ambition*, or the Increase of his  
 own *Power and Dominion* ; he will take  
 much more pleasure in being able to be  
*publickly beneficial* to Mankind, by main-  
 taining

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taining their just Rights and Properties; S E R M.  
than in obtaining to *Himself* Power, for IV.  
Powers sake. 

A G A I N: A person of This disposition, if he be in his station a *Preacher* of the *Gospel*; he will not have in his View the *temporal* Grandour of any particular *Sect* or *Party* of Men; but will always endeavour to set before men the Truth of God in That native *Simplicity*, and represent to them the religion of Christ (in the manner our Lord himself represented it) to be such a *reasonable* Service, as that it may effectually *convince* the Minds of Gainsayers, and, by the irresistible force of Truth and Reason, compel them to submit themselves to the Obedience of Christ. And above all things he will take care to give evidence in his whole behaviour, that He *himself* sincerely believes and expects That Judgement to come, which he sets forth to *Others* as the Great Argument that must oblige them to embrace the Truths and to obey the Precepts of the Gospel: According to That direction of our Saviour; *Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which*



S E R M. *is in Heaven.* If he lives in a *corrupt* and  
 IV. degenerate *Age*, he will *principally* set  
 himself, with all meekness and gentleness,  
 to oppose the *particular corruptions* of the  
*Age* he lives in ; endeavouring, by all fair  
 and righteous methods, to bring as Many  
 as possible to the acknowledgement of the  
 Truth.

*Lastly*, S U C H a person, if he be in the  
 capacity of a *Father* or *Master of a Fa-*  
 *mily*, will take all proper occasions to in-  
 still right notions of Truth and Virtue,  
 into those over whom the Circumstances  
 of his State and Relation naturally give  
 him an Influence. And by his *Private*  
*Example*, showing in his most free and  
 retired conversation, that he has constant-  
 ly upon his mind That *Real* Regard to  
 God and Virtue, which 'tis more easy and  
 usual to make Show of in Publick ; he  
 will with great efficacy promote the True  
 Honour of God, and the advancement of  
 sincere Religion. For, *formal Admoni-*  
*tions* and *Publick Declarations* concerning  
 matters of *Religion*, are apt to be of very  
 small force, either towards fixing in the  
*Mind Right Principles*, or forming in the  
*Manners a Habit of virtuous Practice* ; if  
 in

*The Character of a Good Man.* 91

in the *private* life and conversation of S E R M.  
those by whom Families are to be direct- IV.  
ed, there appear Prophaneness and Impi-  
ety, or Lewdness and Debauchery, or  
tyrannical Oppressiveness and violent and  
unreasonable Passions. How affectionate  
soever the Exhortations of the Preachers  
of the Gospel be, and how often soever  
repeated Instructions be given to young  
persons either in Schools or otherwise;  
yet if the Examples they find at home in  
the Practice of common Life, be vitious,  
debauched, and altogether contrary to the  
Precepts and Admonitions given them in  
form; the effect of all such instruction  
cannot but be, comparatively speaking,  
very inconsiderable. Nor is there any  
other *possible* way, by which there can be  
any Hope that the arguments of Religion  
should come to have their due Weight,  
and *general* Efficacy in the World; unless  
They, whose State, Relation, and Cir-  
cumstances, give them a Natural Influ-  
ence over Many, will show in the whole  
course of their private conversation, and  
in the freest and most retired part of  
common Life, that they have really upon  
their minds a Sense and Concern for Re-  
ligion;

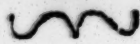
SERM. religion; that they have habitually in all  
 IV. their Actions a constant Regard to God,  
 ~~~~~ and a sincere Desire to promote the Knowledge of Truth and the Practice of Virtue and Goodness amongst Men. This was the Temper of *Abraham*; Upon account of which, That Great character is given him in the Text, with a *repeated* Assurance of the Blessings designed him: *I know Him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgement; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, That which he hath spoken of him.*

THE words, *He will Command his Children and his household after him*, seem to imply, as if it was in *Abraham's* power to *undertake* for those that were to come after him, *what* they should do; and as if *They* were originally under an *obligation* to *perform* what he should require of them. Which in general, 'tis evident, cannot be true: Because then it would follow, that All Other Heads of Families had the same Authority likewise; and consequently, the posterity of every family, lying under the *same* obligation,

gation, would be under a necessity, where-
ever any *False* religion prevailed, to con-
tinue for ever in the profession of such
false Religion: Directly contrary to *Abra-*
ham's own Practice, who, being born a-
mong an idolatrous and corrupt people,
gat him out from his country, and from his
kindred, and from his Father's house;
Gen. xii. 1. Neither, where the *Truth*
itself prevails, is it sufficient that Those
who come after, follow it barely upon the
Command of those who went before: Be-
cause, though it be indeed, by Chance,
the *Truth* only, which they follow; yet,
They not knowing it to be so, but follow-
ing it merely upon such a principle, as
would equally have made them follow *A-*
ny Errour, 'tis, with regard to the Mora-
lity of *Their Act*, the very same thing as
if they were *not* in the Truth. But in
Some particular Cases, and with regard to
some particular things, such Circumstan-
ces there *may* be, as may make it very rea-
sonable for Parents and Governours to
Command *their children and their house-*
hold after them; and very reasonable for
These, to be under the strictest Obligation
to *obey* such Commands. Where things are
in

S E R M.

IV.



S E R M. in their own nature absolutely and *confes-*
 IV. *sedly* indifferent, there the Command of
 proper Superiours is manifestly the *Only*
 Rule of Action. On the other side;
 where things are already made necessary
 by a superiour obligation, as where there
 is a clear and exprefs Command of God;
 or where things are *intrinsically and essen-*
tially obligatory in their own nature, as is
 the *Study of Truth with Sincerity and Im-*
partiality, and the *Practice of all moral*
and eternal Virtues; there the instruction
 and direction, and Example and Authori-
 ty of natural Superiours, is the proper
 means of laying before *ignorant* and
thoughtless minds, and of inforcing upon
 them, those original and antecedent Obli-
 gations. This latter, was the case of *Abra-*
ham in the Text: He was to command
his children and his household after him,
 that they should *keep the way of the Lord,*
to do Justice and Judgement: that they
 should *worship the True God* in opposition
 to *Idols*, and that they should practise *Ju-*
stice and Righteousness towards Men. The
 things were *in themselves* necessarily, of
intrinsick eternal obligation; and the Com-
 mand of *Abraham*, was the setting That
 obligation

obligation before their eyes ; teaching them to see it, and have a just sense of it, reminding them to attend to it, and pressing and enforcing it upon their Minds. In This case therefore, *Abraham* might well undertake, (and it is his great Commendation that he did so,) to command (as far as in him lay) *his children and his household after him* : Because the things themselves, together with *His Command*, clearly carried along with them their own evidence and conviction. The grounds and reasons of which conviction nevertheless, in the midst of universally corrupt and idolatrous nations, might very possibly and probably, in *His* family, as well as in all those around him, not have been attended to ; had they not been seconded by *His* Instruction, Example, and Command. *I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*

Another Instance, wherein there seems to be an Obligation laid upon Posterity, by an *Act* of those who went before them ; is the case of *Circumcision*. Gen. xvii. 9 ; God said to *Abraham*, thou shalt keep

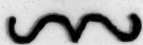
S E R M.

IV.

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IV.

keep my Covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations :-----Every man-child among you,-----that is eight days old, shall be circumcised,-----for an everlasting covenant : And the-----man-child who-----is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my Covenant. Circumcision, was a Token of the Covenant between God and That people ; and an Obligation upon the circumcised person, to keep the Law : Yet 'tis evident an infant at eight days old, could not give his Consent, to take upon himself any such Obligation. The Reason why the Obligation was valid upon him notwithstanding was This. God was pleased to promise to Abraham and his Posterity such and such particular Blessings, as were entirely a free Gift, and which he was not in justice under any obligation to have promised. These Blessings, he limited to the Conditions of a particular Covenant ; and the Seal or Token of That Covenant, was the ceremony of Circumcision. Now if the person who, without his own consent, was circumcised the eighth day, would not afterwards perform the conditions of That Covenant ;
there

there was no wrong done him, if he received not those Blessings, which by *Free Gift only* were annexed to the performance of the conditions of That particular Covenant. And he might *moreover* very justly be *punished*, for rejecting That Covenant ; because *God* has, without controversy, a Right to require from All his Creatures Obedience to such Commands as he thinks fit to impose upon them, whether they themselves give their *Assent* to his Commandments or no.

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IV.


By *Analogy* drawn from this Rite of *Circumcision*, it has for very many Ages been a general Practice in the Christian Church, to receive Infants by *Baptism* into the Obligations of Faith and Obedience to the Gospel ; and to make Profession for them, what they are to believe and obey. Whether this Analogy be *rightly* drawn, or no ; and be a *sufficient* and *adequate* foundation, for what has been built upon it ; is a controversy which I shall not at present enter into : But from what has been already said upon the *Unquestionable* case of *Circumcision*, and upon *Abraham's Command* in the Text to *his children and to his household after him*, and

S E R M. upon the *Nature* of these sorts of Obligations in *general*; the proper *application* I shall make, is, to consider briefly *what* *Obligation* lies upon *Those*, who, without their own Knowledge or Consent have been *baptized* in their *Infancy*, and have had a *Baptismal Vow* made for them by *Others*; *What* *Obligation* really lies upon *Them* to *embrace* and *obey* the *Gospel*, in the *whole* course of their *Lives*. Now it is very evident, *generally* speaking, that no man has a Right to make any Promise for Another, without his own Consent; and no man is obliged to *make good* any such Promise, if there lies upon him no *other* obligation, but what arises merely from *such* a Promise, made without his knowledge or Consent. Neither is it sufficient, that the things promised to be done, are *really* for the person's own *Advantage* who is to perform them. For *every* person, when he arrives at years of understanding, has in all such cases, a Right to judge for *Himself* *what* is his own *Advantage*; and it is not what *Another* thinks, but what he himself is convinced to be for his own *Benefit*, that must finally determine him to *chuse* and *act*. Wherefore, in deed, All
Under-

Undertakings of this kind, such as are S E R M.
Baptismal Vows made on the behalf of IV.
Infants, are not to be esteemed as Promises what the person *shall* do, but what he shall be *taught*, what he shall be *instructed*, what he shall be *reminded* and *called upon* to do, and to take upon himself that he *will* do. For the true *Ground* of *obligation* in this case is, that the things themselves to be performed are in their own nature such, as every Person, when he arrives at the full Use of his Reason, would be indispensably obliged to perform, whether Others had beforehand undertaken for him any such thing, or no. To *inquire carefully* into the Will of God, to *believe* what God declares, and to *do* what he commands, are obligations absolutely incumbent upon every man, though they had never been bound upon him by any Vow or Promise: And therefore the Vow made at Baptism on the behalf of an Infant, is not so truly the Ground of his being obliged; as the *necessary obligation* of the *Things themselves*, is that which makes the *Vow itself* to be valid upon him. Nor is any Promise made by *Others*, so properly with intention to lay

S E R M. any *obligation* upon the person, or tie
 IV. him up to any thing which he would not
 otherwise have been bound to perform;
 But the true Design is only in way of
 kindness and assistance, to *remind* him of
 an obligation, *absolute in itself*, that he
 carefully *inquire after*, and *believe* and
obey the Will of God. And This may,
 very easily, be of Great *Benefit and Use-*
fulness. For every man being obliged to
study impartially the Will of God, and to
 improve himself in the *Knowledge of*
Truth and in the *Practice of Virtue*,
 and to live up to the best *Light* he can
 obtain; it is plainly of very great Advan-
 tage to Men, to be from the Beginning
 instructed in the *way of Truth*, to have
Examples set before them of *Virtue and*
Righteousness, and to be *reminded and cal-*
led upon to consider and attend to those Ob-
 ligations, which are incumbent upon
 Men whether they attend to them or no.
 The Great and Righteous Judge of the
 Whole Earth, knows how to have com-
 passion, upon the *ignorant*, and upon them
 that are *out of the way*; and *will reserve*
mercy in store, according to the exigency
 of every Man's case, for those who,
 2 through

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through ill instruction, wander in the ways of Errour. But it is a mighty *Advantage*, and a particular *Blessing*, to be originally led into the way of *Righteousness*. For so in the Text, it is not only recorded in commendation of *Abraham*, that he would *command his children and his household after him*; but it is taken notice of also in way of consequent Benefit to *Them*, that *They* would accordingly *keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment*.

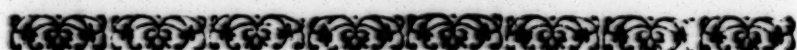
I SHALL conclude, with making this *One only* further Observation. Since *keeping the way of the Lord*, signifies clearly, in *Abraham's* case, believing *the True God*, as well as doing *Righteousness*; and since under the *Gospel* still more emphatically, sincere *Faith* is always insisted upon, as well as *Virtuous Practice*: it may very naturally be inquired, if *Believing* does not, like our *Actions*, depend upon the *Will*; but if Men must *believe* what they have good Evidence for, and cannot *believe* what they see no reason to be convinced of; how then can *Believing* be a Duty, which a Man should be bound to perform? The Answer plainly is: that

SERM. *That Believing*, which is the Duty of
IV. a Christian, is not, in the strict sense
of the word, That bare Assent of the
Understanding which is not in our
Power to with-hold ; but it signifies, in
the *moral* sense, that good Disposition
of the Mind and Will, by which a
Man is disposed to attend to, and ex-
amine impartially, to consider and re-
ceive willingly, what upon due inquiry
he shall find to be the Will of God ; not
carelessly and credulously, but upon so-
ber Reason, and proper Evidence. And
so likewise on the contrary ; *Unbelief*,
in Scripture, does not signify disbeliev-
ing what wants just and sufficient
proof ; but it always means, either care-
lessly and negligently rejecting without
inquiry and without Reason ; or else re-
jecting wilfully and obstinately, through
the Love of Sin and Vice. And this is
evidently the case of all profane, loose,
and debauched Infidels ; who, mere-
ly because they hate to be reformed,
pretend to disbelieve, what if they seri-
ously examined as they ought to do, they
would find all possible reason to embrace.



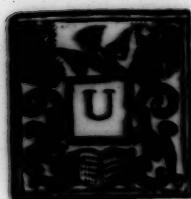
S E R M O N V.

The Nature of Humane Actions.



LUK. xi. 35.

*Take heed therefore, that the Light
which is in Thee be not Dark-
ness.*



U P O N our Lord's having work- S E R M.
ed a remarkable Miracle, ver. V.
14; The *Pharisees*, who were
resolved not to be convinced
by *Any* Evidence whatsoever, because
his Doctrine was a perpetual Reproof
of their Hypocrisy and Other Vices;
alledged, some of them, ver. 15; that he
cast out Devils through *Beelzebub*, the

SERM. chief of the Devils. Others, tempting him;
 V. ver. 16; sought of him a sign from Heaven: That is, Pretending to distrust the Miracles which he worked on *Earth*, as if *These* might possibly be the Effect of some *Magical* Power or Artifice; they insisted that he should call for some miraculous Sign directly from Heaven. Our Lord, knowing the Wickedness of their Hearts, ver. 17; and that they did not really desire to be convinced, but only sought for occasions of cavilling; tells the people, ver. 29; *This is an evil generation; They seek a Sign, and there shall no Sign be given it.* And then he describes the *Incurableness* of the Malice and Hypocrisy of these *Pharisees*; in that their Notions even of *Religion itself*, the very Principle from which alone there is Hope of reformation of Manners; their Notions even about *This very thing*, were themselves the Great Spring and Fountain of Corruption. Their *Religion itself* was *Pride* and *Party*, *Popularity* and *External Show*. And if the Guide of men's Actions be *itself* thus vicious, how vicious must their Actions be! Ver. 34, *The Light* (says he) *of the Body, is the Eye:*
 There-

Therefore when thine eye is single, thy SERM.
whole Body also is full of Light; But when V.
thine Eye is Evil, thy Body also is full of
Darkness. His meaning is: What the
Eye is to the Body; That very same thing
in proportion, the *Moral Judgement* and
Understanding, the Directing Principle, is
to a man's *Mind*. If this *Moral Judgement*
of the Understanding be unbiaſſed
and uncorrupt, and hearkned to with
Simplicity and Sincerity; it will either
direct and preserve men in the Paths of
Truth and Right, or be perpetually calling
upon them to return into them. But
as, when a man's *Eyes* are blinded or put
out, his whole Body must of necessity
move in Darkness: So, if the *Moral Judgement*
of the Mind, the Principle
which ought to guide and direct men's
Actions, be *itself* perverted by unreasonable
Prejudices, and corrupted by vicious
Appetites and Passions; there is no hope,
but such persons must continue in Error
and Wickedness. *Take heed therefore,*
adds our Lord in the words of the Text;
Take Heed, that the Light which is in thee,
be not Darkness: Let every man above
all things consider and take care, that
this

S E R M. this *Moral Judgment* of his Mind and
 V. Understanding, be not corrupted with
 blind Unreasonable Prejudices, and with
 vicious and wilfully indulged Affections.
 For in That case, his very *Guide* becomes
 his *Seducer*; and his *Light* itself, is *Dark-*
ness.

I N the following Discourse upon these words, I shall 1st consider briefly the *Nature of Humane Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*, upon the *Light or Understanding* that is in the Mind of Man. 2^{dly}, I shall show *what Power* men have over their own Actions, with regard to the *Influence* of That Light or Understanding, by which they are to be directed. And 3^{dly}, I shall consider of what *Consequence* it is in matters of Religion, that men fail not in this first and grand Foundation of all; in the *Root*, the *Spring*, the universal *Guide* and *Director* of their Actions. *Take heed, that the Light which is in thee, be not Darkness.*

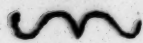
I. I am to consider the *Nature* of *Humane Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*; upon the *Light or Understanding* that is in
 the

the Mind of Man. The *Motions of Matter* being All necessary, it is evident that *Matter* can in no sense possibly be capable of any *Action at all*. It can neither begin to *move itself* when *at Rest*, nor put any *Stop to itself* when *in Motion*, nor in any degree alter its own *determination*, or its present *State or manner of Existence*. But whatever *impressions* it receives from the *Impulses* of other *Matter*, or from the *Influences* of external *Agents*; by *These*, and *These only*, it is always necessarily and invariably determined. *Sensitive* and *Brute Animals* have in themselves a *higher Principle*, a *Principle of Self-motion*; by which they act and determine themselves, according to the Influence of certain *Appetites and Passions*. But it is always according to *That Influence and Direction merely*. For over the *Appetites and Passions themselves*, they have *No Government*; no *moral Judgment or Discernment* of the Difference of *Good and Evil*; no *superiour Light or Direction*, by which to *suppress* a hurtful *Appetite*, or *over-rule* the *Instincts of Passion*: And therefore they are not at all *accountable* for any thing they do. This is the proper

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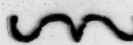
V.



per and peculiar Nature of *Humane Actions*; the distinguishing character by which *Man*, as a *rational* and *moral Agent*, is distinguished from the inferior Creation. He not only has in himself a *Power of Acting*, which is in common to him with the irrational creatures; but he has moreover a *still higher Principle* or *Power of directing* his *Actions*, with some *determinate Views*, and to some certain and constant *End*. He has a *Power of judging beforehand*, concerning the *Consequences* of his *Actions*, concerning the *Reasonableness* or *Unreasonableness* of the *End* he aims at; and he has a *Power of recollecting, after* the *Action* done, whether he acted with a good or an evil *View*. He can either *follow* the irregular *Motions* of All his *Appetites and Passions*, as do the *Beasts* that perish; or he can *restrain* and *overrule* their *Sollicitations*, by attending to the *Guidance* of a *Superiour Light* of *Reason and Religion*. Nay, a man cannot indeed *but* have *some View* and *Design* in every thing he does. Even when he abandons himself *most implicitly* to the *Brutal Guidance* of *mere Appetite and Passion*, still he does it with *some View*; and

and with a *Consciousness*, which *Beasts* S E R M.
have not, that he knowingly and deli- V.
berately *chuses* to aim at some mean and
unworthy End. Hence arises That *Judge-*
ment of Reflexion which we call *Conscience* ;
by which a man either *approves* or *con-*
demns his own *past* Actions, and appre-
hends that he shall accordingly be *ap-*
proved or *condemned* by *Him* also to whom
he must finally *give account* of himself.
If a man, in the general course of his
Life, accustoms himself to consider these
things beforehand, that is, if he will be-
have himself as a rational Creature ; *If*
he accustoms himself in all his Actions
to consider the Reason and Equity of
Things, to consider what is reasonable
for *Himself* to do, or for *Him* to expect
should be done by *Another* ; to consider
what is agreeable to the Will of God,
and likely to be approved at the Bar of
an impartial and All-seeing Judge : *If*
This (I say) be his main directing Prin-
ciple, and the Point which he constantly
keeps in View ; his Actions, *generally*
speaking, will not fail to be *Virtuous* and
Good. For such as is the Root or Cause,
such will be the Effect : Such as is the
Fountain

SERM. Fountain, such will be the Streams that

V.  issue from it. A Good tree, will not *usually* bring forth Bad fruit. A Good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, will naturally bring forth Good things. For out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth will speak, and the Hands will be accordingly directed to act.

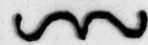
ON the contrary ; *If* a man's Principles be loose and Atheistical ; *If* he has no Sense of the Reason and Equity of things, nor Apprehension of the righteous Judgment of God ; *If* his *Views* be no other than the satisfying of his Appetites, the gratification of his Passions, the pursuing his present Interests, and pleasing his own unreasonable Self-will ; it cannot be, but his Actions will be *generally* immoral and vicious.

FURTHER yet ; *If* a man's Principles be *Superstitious*, that is, such as not only *set him at liberty* from the great Ties of Benevolence and Charity, but moreover lay upon him the strongest *direct and positive Obligation* to unrighteous Practices ; in This case, his Conduct will necessarily be as much worse, than That of a person who has *no* Principles at all ;

The Nature of Humane Actions.

III

as One who follows a *False Light* that leads directly to Destruction goes more certainly out of the right way, than he who at all adventures walks in *Darkness*. Such a one will act *wickedly*, not only when his *Pleasures*, his *Interest*, or his *Passions* prompt him; which is the farthest a Man of *no principles* will go; But *This Man*, in *opposition* to all his own natural Inclinations and Passions, as well as to the Reason and Truth of things, will, out of *Principle*, and in order to do God good Service, run zealously into the vilest barbarities of unrighteousness. This is a consideration very necessary to be distinctly attended to, concerning the *Nature* and *Spring* of *Human Actions*; and what *Dependence* they have upon the *directing Principle*, upon the *Light* or *Understanding* that is in the Mind of Man.

SERM.
V.


II. I PROPOSED to show *what Power* Men have over their own Actions, with regard to the *Influence* of That Light or Understanding, by which they are to be directed. Every Action a Man does, Every Action of any considerable importance in life, Every Action that is of a Moral or Immoral nature; must of necessity be done

S E R M. done with *some View* or other, either
 V. upon a *Good Principle* or a *Bad* one.
 ~~~~~ For when we speak of man's having *No Principles* at all, the Meaning is only that they have *No Good Principles*; and that they act entirely upon this *One ill Principle*, of thinking themselves at Liberty from all Obligation to regard the Essential Differences of Good and Evil. Every Action (I say) of a rational Creature, every such action as has any thing of Morality or Immorality in it, must of necessity be done with *Some View* or other, either upon a *Good Principle* or a *Bad* one. Now if Men's *Principles* were necessarily implanted in their *Nature*, and their *Actions* by a like *natural Necessity* followed from their *Principles*; the Consequence then indeed would be, that Men had *no Power* at all over their Own Actions, and consequently could be no way *accountable* for what they do. But the Truth, plainly is This. As the *Eye*, or the *Faculty of Seeing*, is not at all formed by the Power of *Man*; and the *Light*, which is the *Object* of Sight, is likewise what *God* has made it, and has no dependence on *Man's Will* or *Pleasure*; and there-

therefore Men are not answerable for ha-  
ving *better* or *worse* Organs of Sense, or  
for having *more* or *less* Light, but only for  
the *Use* of *Those* Eyes and of *That* Light  
which they have : So, with regard to the  
*Mind* likewise, both the *internal Capacity*  
of *Understanding*, and the *external Means*  
of *Information*, are what *God* pleases to  
bestow on every Man, and have no de-  
pendence on the person's *own Will* ; And  
therefore no Man is answerable for having  
a *larger* or *smaller Capacity*, or for hav-  
ing *more* or *fewer Means* of *Information* :  
But he is accountable for the *Use* of *That*  
degree of *Understanding*, and for the *Use*  
or *Abuse* of *Those* Means of *Knowledge*,  
*whatsoever* they be, which *God* has  
thought fit to afford him. A Man may  
*shut* his Eyes, and may *chuse* *Darkness* ra-  
ther than *Light* : Or he may, through  
*Wilfulness* or *Passion*, chuse to follow a  
*False Light* instead of a *True one*, an *ima-*  
*ginary Spectre* instead of a *Reality* : Or  
he may *put out* his Eyes, and bring him-  
self under a sort of necessity of blindly  
following Some *Guide*, who (as it hap-  
pens) may equally lead him in the *Right*  
*Way* or in a *Wrong one*. A Man may by  
VOL. III. I Negli-

S E R M.  
V.  
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SERM.

V.

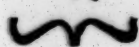
*Negligence, or by Wilfulness, or by Love of Vice, or by Any customary and habitual ill Practice, pervert or blind his own Understanding. He may, by rejecting the Means of discovering the Truth, through his own Fault, and not through Want of Capacity, form to himself ill Principles instead of Good ones. Or, if he has never so good Principles, yet, as seeing the Way is not necessarily walking in it, he may suffer himself to be Tempted to act against his Principles, to act against the Reason of his own Mind, as well as against the Reason and Truth of Things. Men therefore have a Power over their own Actions, notwithstanding all the Influence of That Light or Understanding, by which they are to be directed. Nevertheless; since, generally speaking, such as Men's Principles are, such will be Their Actions; and He whose Conduct is directed by settled ill Principles, will much more constantly, and in much greater Instances, and with Effects of much higher Malignity, do what is Wrong; than He who, having virtuous and good Principles, yet in particular Cases fails of keeping up to them in Practice; it is hence obvious,*

III. IN

III. IN the *Third* place, to observe, of SERM.  
V.  
what *Consequence* it is in matters of Religion, that Men fail not in this first and grand Foundation; in the *Root*, the *Spring*, the universal *Guide* and *Director* of their Actions: *Take heed, that the Light which is in thee, be not Darkness.* If a Man has the *Best* Principles that can be: If he be firmly persuaded in his own Mind, of the essential Difference of Good and Evil, of God's Government of the World, and of a Judgement to come: If he has right Notions of the true Nature of Religion, that it consists in living *soberly, righteously and godly*, under the Inspection of a righteous and all-seeing Judge: Still, such is the Deceitfulness of Sin, so many are the Temptations and Allurements of the World; so blind are the Appetites, so strong the Passions of Men; that nothing is more common, than to see even these *best of Principles* over-ruled, and the Force of them defeated, by the Strength and Prevalency of different Temptations. How much *more*, when Men's *Principles themselves* are *consistent* with Wickedness, must it be expected that *Degeneracy of Manners* will prevail! and still *more*, if

S E R M.

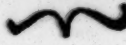
V.



their Principles be not only *consistent* with Vice, but such as moreover *directly* lead them, and even *lay the Obligations of Conscience* upon them, to *unrighteous Practices* ! If the Salt itself has lost its Savour, wherewith shall things be seasoned ? And if the Light itself which is in thee, be Darkness, how great is That Darkness ? To instance in Particulars. If a Man's Religion consists chiefly, in a confident Presumption of his own unconditionate *Predestination* ; will not This naturally lead him to be *stiff* and *censorious*, and to have too little Care of his *Moral and Equitable* Behaviour towards all Men ? If a man can persuade himself that a strong *Credulity*, or an imaginary *Belief* of *unintelligible Notions*, can be truly acceptable in the Sight of God ; has not This an obvious and evident Tendency, to make him pride himself in the pretended *Rightness* of his *Faith* ; and despise the real Virtues, of *Impartiality*, *Equity*, and *Love of Truth* ? If Another can prevail with himself to believe, that after a *vicious and immoral Life*, he may at last upon a Bed of Sicknes, by the *Absolution of the Priest*, or by the *Sacraments*



ments of the Church, or by a confident Reliance upon the Merits of Christ, elude the Threatnings of the Almighty, and artfully escape the Wrath of the Just and Righteous Judge of the whole Earth; does not this plainly give him encouragement to defer his Repentance, to think Virtue and Goodness really needless, and to continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? Again, If a Man can fancy that the most important and fundamental point of Religion, is the adhering fiercely to some one particular Sect, Party, or Denomination of Men; and the contending violently for or against certain peculiar Forms or Ceremonies of Worship; has not This an evident Tendency to make him believe, that, by a great Zeal for these external Forms, he may commute or compensate for the Want of those Moral Virtues, which Alone are of Real and Essential Goodness? But if, beyond All This, a Man's very Mind and Conscience be so far defiled, as that he can imagine Religion to lay a direct Obligation upon him to commit some of the greatest of Wickednesses, to make use of the vilest Frauds and the most open Violences, to

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V.  


118 *The Nature of Humane Actions.*

SERM. *break Faith* against the most Solemn Engagements, and even with the greatest Cruelty to destroy Men's Lives in order to do God good Service; as Those of the Church of Rome have frequently done: Whenever This (I say) is the Case, so that Men can satisfy their very worst Passions, of Ambition, Pride, Cruelty, and Tyranny, not only without the Reproach, but even with the highest Applause, of their own Consciences; What Hope, what Possibility is there, for Virtue and Goodness here to take Any place? Take heed, that the Light which is in thee, be not Darkness.

THE Light, which God originally implanted in Men, is Reason, or their Natural Sense and Discernment of the Difference of Good and Evil. The Light of Revelation, is a Confirmation and Improvement of the Natural Light of Reason. And they are Both of them extinguished, by the Darkness of Irreligion, and (which is still of worse consequence) by the False Lights of Superstition.

THE Inferences from what has been said, are briefly as follows.

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM

## The Nature of Humane Actions. 119

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM this exhortation of our Sa- S E R M.  
viour given to all Christians, *Take heed,* V.  
*that the Light which is in thee, be not dark-*  
*ness*; it is evident that persons even of the  
*meanest* capacities, *may* and *must* have a  
*clear Understanding* of their Christian  
*Duty*, so far as it is at any time to *Them*  
*a Duty*. To live *soberly, righteously, and*  
*godly*, with a constant Sense of God upon  
their Minds, and under a perpetual Ex-  
pectation of the future Judgement; is  
what the *Lowest* Capacities may *see clear-*  
*ly and distinctly* to be their Duty. This  
is *Fundamental* in Religion. Things of  
*greater Difficulty*, they cannot be obliged  
to understand or regard, any further than  
they meet with *particular Light* to direct  
them. If at any time they run on *impli-*  
*citly*, and stop not at the things they *cer-*  
*tainly know*, they run an *apparent hazard*  
either of walking in *Darkness*, or (which  
is still *more dangerous*) of following a  
*False and Deceitful Light*.

2. WHOEVER at any time speaks a-  
gainst *Reason*, in matters of Religion; *knows*  
*not*, or considers not, *whereof he affirms*. All  
*Reason and Truth* is from God; And God  
does as truly *reveal* himself by the *Nature*



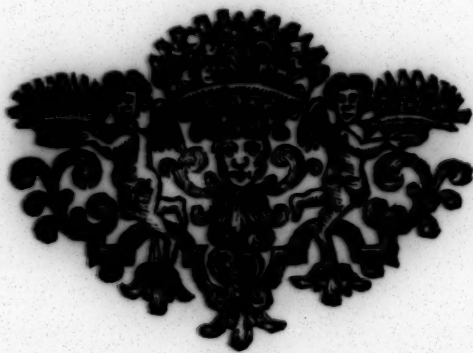
S E R M. *and Reason of Things, as by Inspiration of*  
 V. *Words. Reason, is the Light of God's*  
 ~~~~~ *Creation : And though Men, if they be*  
not very careful and very sincere, may
mistake their own Fancies and Imagina-
tions for Reason ; yet the Nature and
Truth of Things, is still really what it is ;
and Light is always discernible, if Men
would honestly attend to it. The Expe-
rience of all Ages and of all Nations hath
shown, that no Errours have been of such
wide Extent, and of such lasting Conti-
nuance, and so destructive of all Moral
Virtue and Goodness ; as those which Men
have been led into, by departing from the
most evident and rational Fundamentals of
Religion, to follow the blind and false
Lights of Superstition.

3. FROM what has been said, it is evident it never was our Lord's intention, that there should be among Men (what the Church of *Rome* pretends to be) an *Infallible Guide*. Had any such thing been appointed of God, our Saviour's Caution in the Text, and in numberless other places of his Gospel, had been needless and absurd. Teachers of Religion, are, in the nature of the thing, necessary ;

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I 21

cessary; and, in fact, expressly appointed S E R M.
of Christ. But all *Teaching*, supposes that V.
persons are *capable of being taught*; and
that *when they Are taught, they can Then*
see and know the thing to be right. In
the way to eternal life, a man may very
well be supposed to *want* the direction
of a *Guide*: Yet in the whole Course of
That Way, he may by Many *very certain*
Marks and Tokens, laid down *beforehand*
in *Reason and Scripture*, distinguish clear-
ly whether his *Guide* directs him *right* or
no: And if his *Guide* leads him to a *Pre-*
cipice, he may easily enough discern it.
Take heed, that the Light which is in thee,
be not Darkness.



SERMON





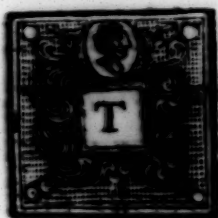
S E R M O N VI.

How to judge of Moral Actions.



LUK. vi. 44.

*For every Tree is known by his own
Fruit : For of Thorns men do
not gather Figs, nor of a Bram-
ble-bush gather they Grapes.*



HERE are some Figures of S E R M. VI.
Speech founded upon Simi-
litudes so obvious, so natu-
ral, so expressive, that whilst
they convey into the minds
even of Those who have the meanest
capacities, a Notion or Doctrine altoge-
ther

S E R M. ther as *distinct* and as *easy* to be understood, as any *Literal* expreffion whatsoever; they at the same time *illustrate* it moreover with the *clearest Light*, and confirm the *Truth* of it with the *strongest Reason or Argument*. Of This kind, there is great Variety of Instances of Scripture.

T H U S when St. *Paul* exhorts Christians to present their Bodies a *Living Sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God; and elsewhere tells them, that they themselves are the *Temple* of God; and threatens, that if any man defile the *Temple* of God, Him shall God destroy: Under the *strong image* of the Unfitness and Abominableness, the Detestableness and Profaneness of any Uncleaness or Impurity appearing in the *Temple of God*; the odiousness of all *moral* impurity, of all *debauched* Practices whatsoever in Any person who professes himself a Worshipper of God, is set forth after a *more lively and affecting manner*, than it could be by any *literal* description whatsoever: And, under the *obvious and sensible idea*, that a *Sacrifice* offered to God, even of a *Beast slain*, could not, with any just sense of the Greatness of the
Divine

Divine Majesty, but be *without Blemish* ; S E R M. VI.
is represented the Acceptableness of a *Living Rational Person*, dedicating himself to the Service of God by a *sober and virtuous course of life*, in opposition to every kind of Debauchery, *more strongly and pathetically*, than it could any way have been done in *plain and direct Terms*, *without such a figurative expression*.

I N like manner in the words of the *Text*, the necessary Connexion between the nature of men's *Actions*, and the *Principles* from which they flow ; and the Absurdity of supposing, that *good Actions* can ever flow from *ill Principles*, or *ill Actions* from *good Principles* ; is expressed with greater Clearness and Strength, under the *similitude* of the regular Productions of nature, than it could have been by the most *literal and direct* Assertion. *Every Tree is known by its own Fruit : For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.*

O U R Saviour, in his Parable of the Sower, St. Matt. xiii, under the similitude of *different sorts of ground*, wherein good Seed being sown, brought forth *fruit* according to the nature of the Soil, in some places

S E R M. places plentifully, in others thinly, in
 VI. others none at all; gives a very *emphat-
 ical* and *accurate* description of the dif-
 ferent Effects, which the Doctrines of
 True Religion, or the Teaching and Ex-
 hortations of Virtue, have upon the Lives
 and Actions of different Sorts of men.
 As the *same Seed*, sown in a *good Soil* or
 a *bad*, brings forth *much Fruit* or *little*,
 or *perishes entirely* and never grows at all;
 so the Knowledge of Truth, and the In-
 structions of Righteousness, *according to
 the different dispositions of the minds* of
 Those, to whom the Arguments of Rea-
 son and the Motives of Religion are
 proposed; are either entirely suppressed
 by them, and extinguished, or else, some-
 times in a greater, sometimes in a less
 degree, they produce the Fruit of *Virtu-
 ous Acts and Habits*, in the course of a
 righteous and religious Life. And from
 hence, throughout the whole Scripture,
 by a figure of Speech grounded upon *the
 analogy of This Parable*, the Acts and
 Habits of every Moral Virtue, founded
 upon the Motives of the Gospel, and
 springing from the Principles of True
 Religion, from the Belief of God and of a
 Judgement

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Judgement to come ; are very expressively termed, *the Fruits of the Spirit* ; the natural Produce of a Mind rightly instructed in the Doctrines of *Truth*, and directed and influenced in all its Actings, by a just Sense of what is *Right in itself* and *Acceptable to God* ; Gal. v. 22 ; *The Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.* And They who by a virtuous course of Life in their whole conversation, and in every part of their Behaviour in the World, show that their Religion is not an *empty Notion* or external *Form of Godliness*, a mere *Denomination* of a Sect or Party ; but a real *Principle* and Ground of Action, a real *Rule and Guide* of life and manners ; are by the Apostle described under *This* character, that they *bring forth Fruit unto God* ; having *their Fruit unto Holiness, and the End everlasting Life* ; Rom. vi. 22 ; vii. 4. The *Figure*, is the *very same* with *That* made use of in the *Text* : Every *Tree is known by his own Fruit* ; for of *Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.* And the *literal sense* of it is explained by our Saviour

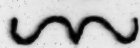
S E R M.
VI.
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S E R M. Saviour himself in the very next words
 VI. following ; ver. 45 : *A good man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is good ; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his Heart, bringeth forth that which is evil : For of the abundance of the Heart, his Mouth speaketh.* Now according to *This* explication, it is evident that, whether by this figurative phrase, *every Tree*, we understand the *Person himself* who acts, or the *Principles* from which his Actions flow ; the *Sense* is, either way, *one and the same*. By the *Actions* of a man's Life, by the whole *Course and Tenour* of his Behaviour in the World, and by *no other distinction* whatsoever, can be ascertained the *True Character* of any *Person*, and the *Real Goodness* or *Badness* of his *Principles*. External Names and Denominations, either of *Things* or *Persons*, are all *deceitful*. Pretences to *Opinions* and *Doctrines*, may be all *fallacious*. *Forms* and *Observances* of all kinds may be *hypocritical*. Any thing may be called by *Any Name*, and Any thing may appear under *Any Shape*. But never can it happen in Any case, that of *Thorns* men should gather
 ther

ther Figs, or that of a Bramble-bush they S E R M.
should gather Grapes. Never can it hap- VI.
pen in Any case, that men of corrupt
Principles and vicious Lives, can really
have any True Religion; or that Any
True Religion, any Doctrine that is from
God, should be the Parent of any Vice
or of any Folly, of any Absurdity, of any
Cruelty, of any Pride, Tyranny, or Con-
tentiousness, or of any thing mischievous
among men. The Acknowledgement and
the rational Worship of God who ruleth
over All; The Universal Love and Good-
will of All men towards All, in which
our Lord declares all the Law and the
Prophets, and all the Gospel too, to be
summarily contained; The Sobriety, Ho-
liness, and Virtuous Living, which the Re-
ligion of Christ requires in Those, who
expect a Judgement to come, and who
(according to his Promise) look for new
Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwell-
eth Righteousness: These things can no
more possibly be the real productive Cause
of any thing hurtful to Mankind, than a
Vine can bring forth any other Fruit than
Grapes, or a Fig-tree than Figs; or than
Sheep (according to another of our Lord's

S E R M.

VI.

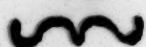


similitudes) can justly be charged with the Rapine committed by *Wolves in Sheeps-clothing*. There is no Principle in Nature of more certain and necessary Truth, of more evident Clearness, of more universal Extent and Usefulness than This. And for *This reason* our Saviour, upon so many occasions, and in numerous Places of the Gospel, repeats this Maxim, and makes perpetual Allusions to it. Thus *Matt. vii. 15; Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps-clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves: Ye shall know them by their Fruits: Do men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles? A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit: Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire: Or, as he elsewhere expresses himself concerning the hypocritical Pharisees; Matt. xv. 13; Every Plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Again, Matt. xii. 33, 34; Concerning the same hypocrites, when, under a pretence of Zeal for Religion, they blasphemed both the Doctrine and the Works of the Holy Ghost; O Generation*

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ration of Vipers, says he, how can ye, being Evil, speak Good things? Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or else make the Tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt; For the Tree is known by his Fruit: That is; Either forbear these wicked and unrighteous Practices, or pretend not to make Profession of Religion at all. To mention but One place more: Job. xv. 1; I am the true Vine, saith our Lord, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away; and every Branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more Fruit. The Meaning is: The Belief of the Doctrine of Christ, and of a Judgement to come, is the Foundation, the Root or Principle of all Christian Virtues: Every man therefore who calls himself a Christian, and yet lives not in the Practice of Christian Virtue, is rejected of God, as a Dead Branch; as having no participation in That Vital Principle which alone unites him to Christ here, and entitles him to a Share in his Kingdom hereafter.

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from the *Nature and Reason of the Thing*, and from the *Use of the like manner of Speaking in other places of Scripture*; the *Doctrine* contained in the words, appears plainly to be This: That by the *Actions* of a man's Life, by his *virtuous or vitious Practice*, by the whole *Course and Tenour* of his Behaviour in the World, and by *no other Mark or Distinction* whatsoever, can with any certainty be determined the *True Character* of *Any Person*, and the *Real Goodness or Badness* of the *Principles* by which he is governed. *Every Tree is known by his Own Fruit: For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.*

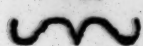
AND the *Use* of this *Doctrine* is of the *greatest Importance and Extent*: For, from hence may be estimated the *Excellency and Weightiness* of *Any particular Truth*, and the *Measure or Degree of Malignity* of every Sort of *Errour*, in matters of Religion. From hence may be judged the *Nature and Quality* of every kind of *Materials*, built (according to the Apostle St Paul's similitude, 1 Cor. iii. 12.)

iii. 12.) *upon the Foundation of Christ*; S E R M. VI.
 whether it be *Gold, Silver, Precious-stones, Wood, Hay, or Stubble*. Whether it be *Work* of such a sort, as, when it comes to be *tried by the Fire* of the Divine Judgement, it will *abide*, and the Builder shall *receive a Reward* for it. Or whether it shall be *burnt*, and He accordingly shall *suffer loss*; and yet he himself finally be *saved, but so as by Fire*. Or whether, lastly, it be such as is *destructive* of the very *Foundation itself*, on which it is built; and Then That severe Threatning in the following words be applicable to him; ver. 17; *If any man destroy the Temple of God, Him shall God destroy.*

THE *End and Design* of all Religion; the *Proper Effect and Produce* of Good Principles; the *Good Fruit* of a Good Tree; the *ultimate View and Fundamental Intention* of all religious Truths, implanted in men either by Nature or Teaching; is the *Practice of Virtue*. For the word Religion, in its very *Notion and original Meaning*, signifies an *Obligation*; an *Obligation* upon men, arising from the *Reason of Things* and from the *Government of God*, to do what is *just and virtuous* and

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good ; to live, in a constant habitual Sense and Acknowledgement of God, in the practice of universal Justice and Charity towards Men, and in a regular and sober Government of their Own Passions ; under a firm perswasion and continual expectation of the righteous distribution of Rewards and Punishments at their proper Season, in the eternal Judgement of God. This, is the Foundation of Religion ; the Fundamental Doctrine ; in all Places, and at all Times, invariable and eternal. This, being corrupted by numerous Superstitions among the Jews, and by the absurdest Idolatries and most enormous Immoralities among the Heathen, Christ came into the World to restore ; and, by the preaching of Forgiveness upon True Repentance and effectual Amendment of Life and Manners, to bring back Sinners to the Kingdom of God, through the Obedience of the Gospel. In proportion therefore as any Doctrine of Truth has a greater or more proper and more immediate Tendency to promote This Great End, to produce This Fruit of the Spirit ; exactly the very same proportion has it of Weight and Excellency, in the religious
estima-

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estimation of things: 'Tis Gold, or Silver, or Precious Stones, (in the Apostle's Language,) built upon the Foundation of Christ. And, on the other side, any Erroneous Opinion; in proportion as it has Any, or No Moral Influence; in the very same proportion, it is either Faulty or Innocent. 'Tis (in St Paul's similitude) either Wood, Hay, Stubble; something that is merely lost labour, useless only, and insignificant, and of no Strength in the Building: Or else it is opposite to, and destructive of, the very Foundation of the Temple of God. 'Tis (in the analogy of our Saviour's Parable,) That which denominates a Man either to be a Vine, in which are many Fruitless Branches; or that he is (according to the Comparison in the Text) a Thorn or a Bramble-bush, from which it is impossible to expect there should ever at all be gathered Figs or Grapes.

By This Rule therefore (I say) may certainly be distinguished the Measure or Degree of Malignity of every Sort of Error, in matters of Religion.

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BY *This*, (to instance in *Particulars*,) it appears *Wherein* consisted the *malignity* of the *Heathen-Idolatry*, and *how Great* the *Evil* of it was. For whereas the rational *Worship* of the *One True God* of *Nature*, and *Governour* of the *Universe*, and the *Acknowledgement* of his *True Perfections* and *Attributes*, taught by the original uncorrupted *Light* of *Nature* and *Reason*, leads Men by a *direct* and *proper*, by an *immediate*, *natural*, and *perpetual Influence*, to the *Imitation* and *Practice* of those moral and eternal *Virtues*, which, in their highest and complete *Perfection*, are the *Excellencies* of the *Divine Nature* itself; the *Worship* of *Wood and Stone*, on the contrary, by a no less natural and immediate *Tendency*, leads Men to place *empty superstitious* and *senseless Observances* in the Room of all real *Virtue* and *Goodness*. And the *Worship* of *Fictitious Deities*, formed, by the *Imaginations* of *Corrupt Men*, like to *Themselves* in the *Practice* of all *unrighteousness* and *Debauchery*; This, still much more, leads Men into the most *abominable*, *Corruption* of *Manners*. According to the description *St Paul* gives of the *Heath-*
then-

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then-World; Rom. i. 21; *Because that* S E R M. VI.
when they knew God, they glorified him not
as God,-----and did not like to retain God
in their Knowledge; therefore God gave
them over to a reprobate mind, to do
those things which are not convenient.

Again: B Y the *same* measure of judging, may easily be understood the *Nature* of *That Errour*, and the *Degree* of its *ill Effect*, which the Nation of the *Jews* had very generally fallen into, in and before our Saviour's time; viz. their laying the great *Stress* of *Religion*, more upon the exact *Observance* of certain *Outward Ceremonies*, than upon the habitual *Practice* of *Moral Virtue*. The *Ceremonies* of the *Jewish Law*, besides their perpetual *typifying* of the *Messiah* to come, and their *distinguishing* in a most remarkable manner the *National Worshippers* of the *God of Heaven* from all the *idolatrous Nations* of the *Earth*; were moreover appointed of *God* to be continual *Emblems*, and as it were *Memorials* of their *Obligation* to *Moral Holiness*. *Sanctify yourselves, saith the Lord; Levit. xi. 44; and ye shall be Holy, for I am Holy: And if ye will obey*
my

S E R M. *my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,----*
 VI. *ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests,*
 Ex. xix. 5. *and a Holy Nation. So far therefore as*
 their Observance of the *Ceremonies* of the
 Law, promoted the *End* for which those
 Ordinances were appointed; *So far as*
 they kept that people *steddy* in their *Ad-*
herence to the *Worship* of the *True God*,
 and, by the Care required in avoiding
 every *natural* Impurity, continually re-
 minded them to be much more fearful of
 whatever was *morally* such: *So far* those
 Ceremonies were of *real Esteem* in the
 Sight of *God*, and of *real* religious *Ad-*
vantage to *Men*. Whensoever the Obser-
 vance of the same *outward Ceremonies*,
 was separate from the *internal Moral* Be-
 nefit; the *Ceremony* then became *useless*, and
 the *Observation* of it *vain*. But when at
 any time the *Ceremony* came in *competition*
 with the *Moral Duty*, or was *preferred*
 before it, or was presumed to be *accepta-*
ble in the *Stead* of it; in the *Stead* of the
weightier matters of the Law, Justice,
Mercy, and Faithfulness; Then the *Cere-*
mony, though of *God's own* appointment,
 became (as the *Prophets* in the *Old Testa-*
ment, and our *Saviour* in the *Gospel*, per-
 petually

petually declare; it became) *odious* to S E R M. VI.
God, and *abominable* in his Sight.

Lastly: B Y the *same* Rule may be judged the *degree* of *Malignity* of any *erroneous Notions* or *Opinions* among Christians. The *End* and *Design* of the *Gospel* of *Christ*, is to *restore Sinners* to the *Favour* of *God*, by bringing them back to the *Practice* of *Righteousness* and *True Holiness*. So far as *Any Errour whatsoever*, hurts not and prevents not *This Design*; so far as it is merely *speculative*, and produces no *Fruit* of evil *Consequences* in *Practice*; so far it is *innocent*, and may be ascribed to *Weakness*. But in what *degree* soever its *Influence* is hurtful to *Virtue*, in the very *same* proportion it is always *Faulty* in *Men*, and *blame-worthy* before *God*.

F O R instance: With regard to erroneous Notions concerning *God*: Every Opinion concerning the *Divine Nature* or *Perfections*, which is in itself *absurd* and *unintelligible*, is just *so far* hurtful to Religion, as it *diverts* Men from the *Practice* of the *Law* of *Righteousness*, by filling them with a *childish* and *superstitious* imagination, that *God* is *pleased* with their
2 *pretending*

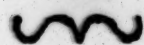
SERM. VI. *pretending or fancying that they believe they know not what.* Notions concerning *absolute and unconditionate Predestination*, are just so far faulty and blame-worthy in Religion, as they *cut the Sinews and demolish all the Motives of Virtue*, by ascribing to God *such a Sovereignty*, as *destroys all the Other Perfections of his Nature*; a *Sovereignty*, denoting a *Power of acting*, in *Moral Matters*, without regard to *Moral Reason*; Which, in Truth and Reality, is no more an *Attribute of God*, than the *Power of acting in natural things*, contrary to *Natural Possibility*. Erroneous Notions concerning *Faith*, (taking it to signify a mere *credulity*; whereas in truth, when spoken of as a Christian virtue, it always means *Fidelity*, or *Acting Faithfully and steddily upon Christian Principles*;) Errours concerning *Grace*, (taking it to signify an *Operation of God upon Men*, when indeed it denotes His *gracious Acceptance of their Repentance and Amendment*, brought about by the *Motives and Assistances of the Gospel*;) Errours concerning the *Merits of Christ*, (when *vicious and debauched persons* hope to be saved by *His Merits*, instead of *re-*
forming

forming and amending their Manners in S E R M.
order to obtain Forgiveness through His VI.
Intercession :) And, still more than all
these, Applications made to *Angels*, and
to *Saints departed*, and to *Images* of
Wood and Stone, and *Other* the like *In-*
ventions ; All These things, are, upon
One and the same Account, *destructive* of
true Religion ; in that they suppose Obe-
dience to the eternal and unchangeable
Law of God, which is the Practice of
Moral Virtue, may be commuted for by
any other Performances whatsoever :
Which is indeed the *Essence* of all *Super-*
stition : 'Tis, in the Allusion made by
our Saviour in the Text, the Fruit of
the *Thorn* or *Bramble-bush*, instead of
Grapes.

A G A I N ; With regard likewise to er-
roneous Notions concerning our Duty to-
wards *Men* : Every Opinion that leads in
Practice to *Contentiousness*, *Pride*, *Cruelty*,
and the like ; is evidently so far *not inno-*
cent, but *destructive* of Religion, as it is
inconsistent with the Great and Eternal
Law of *Charity* and *Good-will* towards
Mankind. From whence may easily be
perceived the extreme *Malignity* of the
Romish

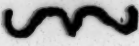
S E R M.

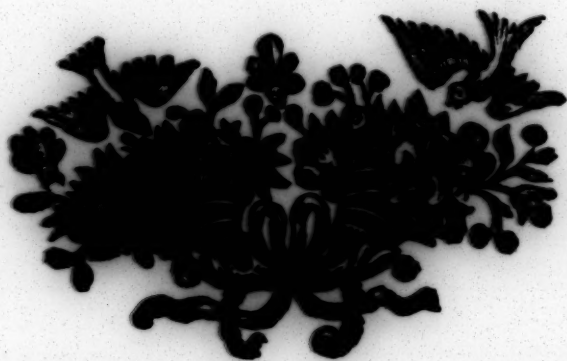
VI.



Romish Doctrine of Persecution; by which all the *Authority*, wherewith God has invested men for the *Incouragement of Virtue* and *Punishment of Vice*, has been wickedly and perversely imployed in *forcing a violent and hypocritical Pretence of Unity of Opinion*, in matters generally of *doubtful Speculation*, and oft-times of *Un-godly Practice* too; to the entire *Subversion* both of *Truth and Charity*.

Lastly; WITH regard to erroneous Notions concerning every man's own private Duty in the Government of *Himself*: Every Opinion that gives Licence to Any Sort of *Debauchery*; that gives men Incouragement to *sin*, in hopes that *Grace may abound*; turning the *Grace of God into Lasciviousness*, as the Apostle expresses it, and *making Christ the Minister of Sin*; Every such opinion, I say, is a *Root of Bitterness*, and brings forth *Fruit unto Death*. Of This Sort is That desperate Notion which has prevailed so much in the Church of *Rome*; a relying upon repeated *Confessions* and *Absolutions* for the *Pardon of Sins*, in the *Practice* of which they still however *continue*. And of the same Kind is That dangerous expectation

pectation even among *Protestants* too; SERM.
when Men of *loose and debauched Lives* VI.
flatter themselves, that, without Any real Virtue or Holiness, they shall be accepted of God, upon their performing, on a Bed of Sickness and at the Approach of *Death*, some of those external Duties, which were instituted on purpose to be *Obligations* and *Assistances* to *Holiness* of *Life*. But our Rule is One, and Plain: *He that doth Righteousness, is Righteous.* Which is the *literal* Meaning of the *Figure* in the Text: *Every Tree is known by his own Fruit: For of Thorns men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble-bush gather they Grapes.* 





S E R M O N VII.

The Nature of Religious Truths.



2 T I M. ii. 25.

In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.



A S *Light* is necessarily and essentially different from *Darkness*, notwithstanding those who are blind cannot distinguish That difference; so, notwithstanding the Weakness and Blindness

S E R M.
VII.
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SERM. VII. nefs of mens Understandings, and the much worſe Confuſion ariſing from the Corruption and Perverſeneſs of their Wills; yet *Truth* is ſtill, in the Nature of Things, always Real and Invariable, and, for the moſt part, *distinguishable* alſo from *Errour*. In *ſome kinds* of things, 'tis indeed very *difficult* for *Us* to diſcover where the Truth lies; the *Causes* of things, being abſtruſe; the *Ends and Deſigns* of them, remote; the *things themſelves*, often intricate; the *Manner* how they may poſſibly be, diſerſe and various; and *our Understanding*, in itſelf finite and fallible. But This difficulty of finding out the Truth, is generally in things of That nature only; which are of no great importance for us to know. As the *Eyes* of our *Body*, are fitted only to diſcern things within the reach of ſuch a diſtance, as 'tis of Uſe to us in Life to comprehend within our View; ſo our *Understanding*, which is the *Eye* of the *Mind*, can very difficultly ſearch into the Truth of numberleſs things, which it does not concern us diſtinctly to know. But in All things of *importance*, in all things of *great and real*

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real Use to us, such as are the eternal S E R M.
Differences of Good and Evil, and all VII.
Matters fundamental in *Religion*; in *These*
things, Truth is always as distinguishable
to the unprejudiced Understanding of a
Person even of a *mean* Capacity, as Light
is by the Eye distinguishable from Dark-
ness.

T H A T *God*, the Maker and Judge of
all, is to be worshipped, rather than the
Fictions of Humane Folly. That the
Worship most acceptable to him, is the
Obedience of a virtuous and sober Life,
rather than an Endless Circle of mere
external Ceremonies. That the Practice
of *Justice, Righteousness, Meekness* and
Charity, is much more useful to men,
than their stirring up each others Zeal
for or against opinions, of which they
understand very little: These great Lines
of Truth, are so plainly, so brightly
conspicuous, both in Reason and Scrip-
ture, that *he who runs may read them*.
Whosoever is led into any Errour, con-
trary to these *Great and Fundamental*
Truths, 'tis not by his *Understanding*, but
by his *Will* that he is deceived; and

S E R M.
VII.

therefore he is justly answerable for his Folly. God would have all men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. The Light held forth to them is clear and strong; the Rules are Few and conspicuous; that an unprejudiced Person would hardly think it possible they should be mistaken. Yet so extensive is *That kind of Errour* which proceeds from Wilfulness and corrupt Affections, that in opposition to these Great and Plain Rules it is, that the *whole World lieth in Wickedness*, 1 Joh. v. 19. In opposition to the Evidence of This shining Light it is, that the Devotion of the *Popish* World is transferred from the God and Father of all things, and from the One only Mediator whom *He* has appointed; to Saints, and Angels, and Images, and fictitious Relicks. In opposition to the same plain and evident Truths it is, that, not in the *Popish* World only, but in too great a part even of That also which calls itself *Protestant*, mere outward and customary Forms have by Many persons a greater Strefs laid upon them, than the weightier matters of the Law, Practice

Practice of True Virtue: And men generally are more concerned to support uncertain Opinions, than to promote the Habits of Justice, Goodness, Temperance, Meekness, and universal Good-will towards Mankind; upon which principally depends our Happiness in *This* World, and our Title to *That which is to come*. This is the Great Corruption, the Great and Universal Errour of All Ages in matters of Religion. And they who Thus *oppose themselves* to the Great End and Design of the Gospel, subverting the Simplicity and Purity of the doctrine of Christ; these, as well as the Atheistical, debauched, and profane, are the Persons whom we ought to be continually *instructing in Meekness, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth*.

IN which words of the Apostle, we may observe distinctly the following particulars. 1st, A supposition laid down; That *Truth* is something *real in itself*, and of *importance* to *Men*; something that *may be found*, and which we *ought to seek after*. 2^{dly}, An Observation made

L 3 concerning

S E R M.
VII.
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S E R M.
VII.

concerning the corrupt state and disposition of Mankind; that Some there will always be, who *will* set themselves to *oppose* the Truth. 3dly, A Direction given, concerning our *Own* Duty; that we ought to *instruct* such persons, in *Meekness*. And 4thly, a *Reason* added, *why* we ought to do it in *That* manner; *if* God *peradventure* will give them *Repentance* to the *acknowledgment* of the Truth.

1st. H E R E is a *Supposition* laid down; that *Truth*, is something *real* in *itself*, and of *importance* to *Men*; something that *may* be found, and which we *ought* to seek after. I have already observed, that where-ever the Scripture speaks of *Truth*, it always means *such* Truth as has relation to *Religion*; And I shall use the word in *That* sense, thro' the whole following Discourse. *All* Truth, of what kind *soever* it be, is *real*; but *not* always of *importance*. *All* Truth, has its *Foundation* in *Nature*; but is *not* always necessary, or of any great Use for Us to know. But Truth in matters of *Religion*, is always of the greatest *importance*; as being the *Foundation* and the *Support*, of
Right

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Right Practice. Men, upon *erroneous* S E R M.
Principles, may do what is Right by VII.
Chance; or the general *Probity* of their
Temper, may overrule the ill influence of
mistaken Principles: But there can be no
certain, there can be no *steady* Rule of good
Practice, without a Foundation of Truth.
All *Errour* is founded in *Imagination* on-
ly; 'Tis a Shadow, without a Substance;
'Tis generally nothing else, but a careless
following of *other mens* Opinions, or pre-
tended Opinions; a lazy and formal Ad-
herence to the *Customs* of the Age men
live in, or the *Notions* which *happen* to
prevail, like *other Fashions*, in *particular*
Places, and among certain *Seets* or *Par-*
ties of men. Principles of which kind,
can be no better a Foundation of Practice,
than mere Chance; And Religion built
upon such a quick-sand, is, in the several
Nations of the Earth, nothing at all more
than the *Custom* or *Fashion* of the *Coun-*
try. Religion acceptable to God, who
judges the Heart; must be, in the
Mind of every *particular* Person, a Love
of *Truth* and *Right*: A Love of *That*
Truth and Right, not which is esteemed

S E R M. such upon mere vulgar and customary
 VII. Acceptation, but which the Mind itself
 perceives and feels, and, upon Examination finds to be so in reality. Of This, the Mind of *every* uncorrupt Man, is by the Author of Nature made as competent a Judge ; as the Eyes of the Body, are made fit to discern between Light and Darkneſs. And the Righteouſneſs of God's future Judgement, (*That Judgement* wherein men ſhall give an account of themſelves, not in the lump by Sects and Parties, but every man ſingly and perſonally for himſelf ; the Righteouſneſs, I ſay, of *that future Judgement*) muſt of neceſſity depend, upon every man's underſtanding for Himſelf the Rule he is to be judged by. *What* This Rule is, can be of no difficulty for any man to diſcover. *Natural Conſcience*, That *original Light*, That *Candle of the Lord*, which God has implanted in every man's Breſt, tells him always *what* it is, with regard to the *eternal Truths* of *Morality* : And to them who live under the Light of the *Gospel*, the additional *Precepts* given by *Chriſt* in *Scripture*, are no leſs clear and conſpicuous

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cuous. *These Truths* of God, are, like S E R M.
an immoveable *Rock*, the Basis and Foun- VII.
dation of That True Religion, which
approves itself to every man's *Understand-*
ing by clear Reason, and glorifies God by
making men like unto him through Vir-
tue and Righteousness in their *Practice*.
All *false Religions* consist, in *changing*
the Truths of God into a Lie, Rom. i. 25.
Either corrupting the Truth of God's
Creation, by introducing into Religion
things opposite to, or things which draw
men from, the Practice of Virtue, of
Justice, Goodness and Charity. Or cor-
rupting the Truth of God's *Revelation*,
by mixing with the plain simplicity of
the Doctrine of Christ, Traditions and
uncertain Notions of merely Humane In-
vention. *Truth itself*, both *natural* and
revealed, when separate from all corrup-
tions of *Men*, appears always with a na-
tive Lustre and Beauty, with a Strength
and Clearness of Reason, which the Scri-
pture elegantly compares to a *Light shin-*
ing in Darkness; which needs no *external*
Force, no *Violence or Compulsion*, no *arti-*
ficial imposing upon the Understanding, (as
the

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SERM. the *Inventions of Men* do,) to cause it to
 VII. be received and embraced; But it re-
 quires only an *unprejudiced apprehension*,
 and an *unecorrupt Will*, in order to its be-
 ing entertained universally in the Love
 thereof. It always tends also to promote
 mens *true Interest*; their true Interest,
 as well *Temporal* as *Eternal*: The *Peace*
 and *Satisfaction*, of every man's own *Mind*
 in particular; and, in general, universal
Love and Good-will towards all *Others*.
 For all the *Contentions* and *Animosities*,
 all the *Hatred* and *Malice*, all the *Per-*
secution and *Cruelties* which have ever
 been exercised in the World under pre-
 tence of zeal for Religion; have in reality
 always arisen purely upon Account of zeal
 for matters of *mens own* Invention, never
 out of concern for the plain *Laws* and
Commands of God. And all the dark and
 slavish Bigottry, which has at any time
 tormented the Minds of particular men;
 has been owing to the Superstitious Er-
 rours, wherewith the Weakness of Some,
 and the Designs of Others, have misre-
 presented That *Truth of God*, which the
 Apostle stiles the *perfect Law of Liberty*;
 and

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and of which, our Saviour himself declares, *Joh. viii. 32, Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free.* S E R M.
VII.

Not without the greatest reason therefore, is that Exhortation of the Wise man, *Prov. xxiii. 23, Buy the Truth, and sell it not :* And *ch. iv. 7, Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get Wisdom ; and with all thy Getting, get Understanding.* St Paul in like manner, *Phil. iv. 8 ;* in That elegant enumeration, wherein he reckons up every thing that can be thought to be excellent ; and exhorts the *Philippians*, in the most earnest and affectionate manner, *If there be Any Virtue, if there be any Praise, to think upon Those things ;* not without a particular Emphasis, placeth at the Head of All, in the very first rank, *Whatsoever Things are True.* And This may suffice, for Explication of the *First Particular* in the Text ; the *Supposition* laid down, that *Truth* is something *real* in *itself*, and of importance to *Men* ; something that *may* be found, and which we *ought* to seek after.

2dly, T H E

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S E R M. 2dly. T H E next Observation collected
 VII. from the words of the Text, is ; that
 ~~~~~ such is the corrupt State and Disposition  
 of Mankind, that *Some* there will *always*  
*be*, who will set themselves to *oppose* the  
 Truth. Notwithstanding the Native *Ex-*  
*cellency and Beauty* of Truth, considered  
*in itself* ; notwithstanding the *Strength*  
*and Clearness of Reason*, with which it is  
 generally accompanied ; notwithstanding  
 the apparent *Benefit and Advantage*, which  
 the Knowledge of Truth always brings  
 to Mankind ; yet so little sensible are Men  
 of the intrinsic Excellency of things, so  
 unattentive to the Strength of the clearest  
 Reason, so apt to be imposed upon in  
 judging concerning their own true Inter-  
 est ; that nothing is more Common, than  
 to see the plainest and most useful Truths,  
 in matters of Religion, violently and  
 passionately opposed.

T H E principal *Causes* of this Opposi-  
 tion ; are in particular, *Ignorance, Care-*  
*lessness, Prejudice, and Vice.*

T H E *First* cause of Men's setting  
 themselves in opposition to the Light of  
 Truth, is *Ignorance*. Meaning here, by  
*Ignorance,*

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Ignorance, not a bare *Want of Knowledge*: (For the natural and proper Effect of *bare Want of Knowledge*, is, that Men forbear to pass Any judgement *at all*, upon what they understand not; and that they neither contend *for* nor *against* any opinion, before they have some *Reason* to determine them so to do :) But there is a *presumptuous Ignorance*, which *despises Knowledge*; And This makes Men *oppose* the Truth, before they understand any thing of it. Seest thou a man that *despisetb* instruction? there is more hope of a *Fool*, than of Him.

ANOTHER cause of Men's opposing the Truth, is *Carelessness*. They blindly, and without any Consideration, follow the *Customs* of the Place where they happen to live; And the Knowledge of Truth, seems to them to be of no great Importance. They take up their Religion at adventures, not from the consideration of the Laws of *Nature* or of *Revelation*, but merely from the *Company* they *chance* to be educated amongst; And thus *All Religions* are put upon an equal foot, varying according to the accidental Temper of the  
Persons

S E R M. Persons among whom they prevail. Men  
VII. of This disposition, *careless* of finding  
out the Truth, and consequently having  
indeed no Religion at all, but barely the  
name and profession of it; generally pre-  
fer *Any degree* of Ignorance, before the  
carefullest Study either of the *Nature* of  
*Things*, or of the Laws of *God*. To This  
Temper 'tis palpably owing, that so many  
*whole Nations* at this day, *Pagans* and  
*Mahometans*, never give themselves the  
Trouble to enquire at all, whether the  
*Christian* Religion be true or no; And  
even among the Professors of *Christianity*,  
(as they think themselves to be,) many en-  
tire Nations, full of Men very Learned  
and of great Abilities, yet never suffer any  
careful Inquiry to be made, whether the  
Worship of imaginary Saints, and of Ima-  
ges of Wood and Stone, and of Relicks,  
and of Bread; and innumerable other Do-  
ctrines and Practices, absurd Notions and  
superstitious Ceremonies; they never (I  
say) suffer any careful Examination to be  
made, whether these things are agreeable  
to the Plainness and Simplicity, to the  
Holiness



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Holiness and Purity of Christ's Religion, SERM. VII.  
or no.

A *further* Cause of Men's opposing the Truth, is *Prejudice*. They are not perhaps naturally *ignorant*; nor yet of so *lazy and careless* a Temper, as to oppose the Truth merely to avoid the *Trouble* of studying it. But their *Prejudices* are so strong, that the *clearest Light* cannot overcome and dissipate so thick a cloud. They have accustomed themselves to found their Belief entirely in an *implicit* Reliance upon *Other Men*; instead of building it upon the Evidence of *Things themselves*, which is the Foundation of Truth. And Then, the Traditions of the Scribes and Elders and Pharisees; the Decrees of *Popes*, or the Determinations of *Parties*, evidently governed by Worldly Motives; shall have much more Weight with them, to perswade them to *blind* or *shut* their Eyes; than the *whole Scripture* of Truth, or the strongest and *plainest Reason* in the World, shall have to perswade them to *open* them. So little do they consider Those Admonitions of our Saviour; *Search the Scriptures*; and, *He that hath Ears to hear,*

S E R M. *hear, let him hear: And That of St Paul;*  
 VII. *I speak as unto wise men, (that is, to intelligent persons;) judge ye what I say,*  
 1 Cor. x. 15. *And of St. Peter, 1 Pet.*  
 iii. 15. *Be ready always to give an Answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you.*

B U T the *Last and Greatest* reason of Men's setting themselves in opposition to the Truth, is the *Wickedness and Corruption* of their *Manners*; the Love of unrighteousness and debauchery, the Desire of Power and Dominion, the Concern they are under for the Defense and Support of a Sect or Party, without having Any Knowledge how far they are, or are not, in the Right. These are things, which make men to *shut their Eyes* against the Light, to *love and choose darkness rather than Light*, and wilfully to *stop their Ears* against all the Means of being better informed. Concerning such Persons, St Paul prophesies, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 8, *In the last days---men shall be---Boasters,---Despisers of those that are good,---beady, high-minded, Lovers of pleasures more than Lovers of God, Having a Form of godliness,*

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ness, but denying the Power thereof, ----- SERM. VIII.  
*resisting the Truth, men of corrupt minds.*  
 And these things *must be*, saith the same  
 Apostle; (*i. e.* it is fit and just that the Pro- 1 Cor. xi. 19.  
 vidence of God should *permit* it Thus to  
 be;) *that those which are approved, (i. e.*  
*that those who seek and obey the Truth*  
*and Simplicity of the Gospel, separate*  
*from all worldly and unjustifiable Designs,)*  
*may be made manifest among you.*

3dly. THE Third thing observable in  
 the Text, is the *Direction* given us con-  
 cerning *our own* Duty; that we ought in  
*Meekness* to *instruct* those who oppose  
 themselves against the Truth. He who  
*himself, suffers* for well-doing, and for  
 the Testimony of a good Conscience, is  
 sure of being (at least *so far*) in the *Right*:  
 But he who does Violence to *Others*; if  
*they*, whom he does violence to, be in a  
*right* cause, *He* is an Enemy to God:  
 But if they be in the *wrong*, yet *He* dis-  
 honours the Truth, by acting unrighte-  
 ously for it, and not knowing what Spirit  
 he is of. *The Servant of the Lord, must* 2 Tim. ii. 24.  
*not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt*  
*to teach, patient.* We cannot always dis-  
 VGL. III. M cern,



S E R M. cern, *who* they are that err through *igno-*  
 VII. *rance*, and *who* through a *vitious disposition*.



(I speak not here concerning matters of *Immorality*; for Faults of *This* kind, are evident to *all* men.) But if we *could*, yet

Gal. v. 23. *Meekness* is at all *times* necessarily a *Fruit of the Spirit*; And we are commanded to be *patient towards All men*; 1 Th. v. 14; towards them that *oppose*, as well as towards them that are only *ignorant of*, the Truth. *Who is a wise man*, saith St. James, and *indued with Knowledge amongst you?* let him show out of a good conversation his works with *Meekness of Wisdom*. For----the *Wisdom that is from above*, is first *pure*, then *peaceable*, gentle and easy to be intreated. But *Anger, resteth in the bosom of Fools*; Ecces. vii. 9. And the *Wrath of Man, worketh not the Righteousness of God*; Jam. i. 20: being always a *certain Evidence*, that Men are more concerned for some temporal Interest, than for the real Honour of God and Goodness. Men of a true Christian Spirit, sincerely desirous to promote the Knowledge of Truth and the Practice of Virtue in the World, rather than the obtaining

taining of Temporal Power and Domi- S E R M.  
 nion for themselves are always willing to VII.  
 confider, that *they themselves* are fallible ;  
 and therefore constantly endeavour to con-  
 vince *Others*, by the Methods of *Reason*,  
 and not of *Passion* and *Violence*. *Shewing*  
*all Meekness unto all Men, for that we our-*  
*selves also were sometimes foolish ; Tit. iii.*  
*2, 3. Which Temper, is much more rea-*  
*sonable in point of Truth and Errour ;*  
*when, even with regard to Faults of the*  
*Will, St. Paul admonishes, if a man be*  
*overtaken in a Fault,-----restore such a one*  
*in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thy-*  
*self, lest Thou also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1.*  
 (He speaks not of the *Crimes of Malefac-*  
*tors*, such as must necessarily be punished  
 by the hand of *Justice* ; But he means  
*such Faults*: as are to be cured by *Reproof*.)  
 Our *Saviour himself*, though infallible, and  
 could not err ; yet was *meek and lowly in* Mat. xi.  
*Heart* : And rebuked his Disciples with 29.  
 great Severity, when once upon high pro-  
 vocation they discovered an inclination to  
 violent Methods ; *Ye know not* (said he)  
*what manner of Spirit ye are of, Luke ix.*  
 55. Plainly intimating to all succeeding

164 *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

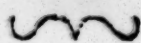
S E R M. Generations, *wherein* would lie the principal Difference between the *Spirit of*  
 VII. *Christ* and the *Spirit of Anti-Christ*.  
 ~~~~~

4thly and *Lastly*; HERE is in the Text annexed a *particular Reason*, with regard to the *Persons to be instructed*; why our Instruction to them, ought always to be accompanied with Meekness: *If God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth*. In the Original, it is; *Least God peradventure should give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth*. The Meaning is: We are to Instruct them with Meekness; least peradventure by our Heat and Passion, we raise in them a just Prejudice against us; when, by meek instruction, they *might* possibly have been brought to Repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the Truth; And so *we*, by our ill behaviour, become answerable for *their* miscarriage. For, nothing can be a greater hindrance to men's being convinced, than the applying *Violence* and *Passion* instead of *Reason*: And nothing can give more Advantage to the Evidence of Truth, than the meek Behaviour of those who profess

The Nature of Religious Truths.

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S E R M.
VII.



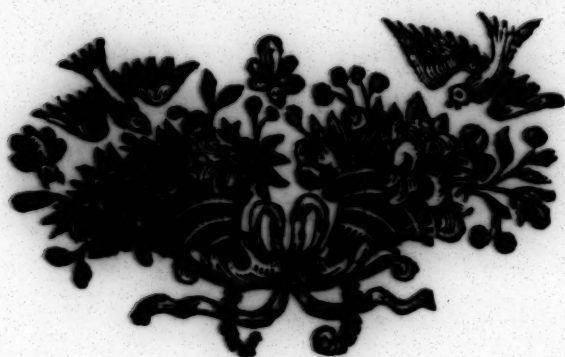
feels it. For *This* reason, we so frequently find repeated in Scripture the following Admonitions, which may serve for a proper Application of this whole Discourse. *Be ready always to give an Answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear; 1 Pet. iii. 15. Give none Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles; 1 Cor. x. 32. Walk in Wisdom towards them that are without; Col. iv. 5. Have a good report of them which are without, lest ye fall into reproach; 1 Tim.* ^{1 Thes. iv. 12.} *iii. 7. Let your Moderation, your meek and exemplary good Spirit, be known unto all men; Phil. iv. 5. Blameless and harmless, the Sons of God; without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom ye shine as Lights in the World; Phil. ii. 15. Having your conversation honest, that is, of good reputation, even among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as Evil-Doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; 1 Pet. ii. 12. And in the words of our Saviour himself; Matt. v. 16; Let*

M 3

your

166 *The Nature of Religious Truths.*

S E R M. *your Light so shine before men ; the Light*
VII. *of your Meekness, Goodness, and Chari-*
~~~~~*ty ; the Light of your excellent temper, and*  
*universal Virtue ; that the whole World*  
*may see your good Works, and glorify your*  
*Father which is in Heaven.*

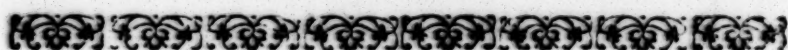


SERMON



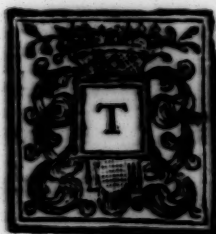
# SERMON VIII.

Of CHRIST's calling Sinners to Repentance.



M A R. ii. 17.

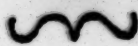
*When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick : I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*



THE Occasion of these words, S E R M. VIII.  
 was briefly This. Our Lord, having called his Apostle *Matthew* from the Receipt of Custom, and the Call being immediately obeyed ; he thereupon  
M 4
went



SERM.  
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went home with the Converted Disciple, unto That Disciple's house. *And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat at his house; (ver. 15.) many Publicans and Sinners, of That Disciple's former acquaintance, having followed them from the Receipt of Custom, sat also together with Jesus and his Disciples; our Lord being always ready, to take every occasion of exhorting Sinners to Repentance, and to give Them every opportunity of receiving such Exhortations. But the conceited Scribes and Pharisees; ver. 16; when they saw him eating with Publicans and Sinners; not considering, according to the Reason and Truth of things, that, not the conversing with Sinners, but the partaking with them in their Sins, or encouraging them therein, is only faulty; nay, that conversing with such persons, not only may be innocent, but, when it is in order to their Amendment, very praise-worthy also: The Scribes and Pharisees, I say, not considering This, but being full of Vanity and Pride, and valuing themselves upon an affected appearance of peculiar Holiness, in despising and setting themselves above the conversation*

of those whom in contempt they called *Publicans and Sinners*; pretended to wonder much, when they saw Jesus sitting at meat with persons of That character; and asked his Disciples, saying, *How is it that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?* Jesus, hearing their question, and knowing their Wickedness and Pride of Heart, replies in the words of the Text; *They that are Whole, have no need of the Physician, but they that are Sick: I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.*

S E R M.  
VIII.  
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IN discoursing upon which words, I shall 1st draw some Observations from the several *particular* expressions we meet with in the Text; and 2^{dly}, I shall consider the *general* Doctrine of *Repentance*, as therein laid down by our Lord.

I. THE *Observations* naturally arising from the several *particular* expressions made use of in the Text; are;

1st, THAT *Sin* is to the *Soul*, what *Disease* or *Sickness* is to the *Body*: The *Whole*, and they that are *Sick*, are here, in our Saviour's phrase, the *Righteous* and the *Sinners*. And the Analogy, is very obvious

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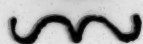
obvious and elegant. For as the *natural* Health of the *Body*, consists in *This*; that every Part and Organ, regularly and duly performs its proper Function; and, when any of These are disordered or perverted in their operations, there ensues Sickness and Diseases: So likewise, with regard to the *Spiritual* or *Moral* State of the *Mind* and *Soul*; when every Faculty is employed in its natural and proper manner, and with a just direction to the end it was designed for; when the *Understanding* judges of things according to Reason and Truth, without partiality and without prejudice; when the *Will* is in its *actions* directed by this judgment of Right, without Obstinacy or Wilfulness; and when the *Passions* in their due subordinate station, and the *Appetites* under the Government of Sober intention, serve only to *quicken* the execution of what *Reason* directs; then is the Mind of man Sound and Whole; fit for all the operations of a *rational* creature, fit for the employments of a *virtuous and religious* Life. On the contrary, the *Abuse* or *misemployment* of *Any* of these Faculties, is the *Disease*

Disease or *Sickness* of the Soul. And S E R M.
when they are *All* of them perverted, *to-* VIII.
tally and *habitually*, by a *general* corrup-
tion and depravation of Manners; then,
as the *Body*, by an incapacity of *all* its
organs for the Uses of *natural* Life, *dies*,
and is dissolved; so the man in his *moral*
capacity, by an *habitual* neglect and dis-
like of all virtuous Practices, becomes
(as the Scripture elegantly expresses it)
Dead in Trespasses and Sins. And as, in
Bodily Diseases, Some are *more* dangerous,
and more likely to prove *mortal*, than
Others; in which sense our Saviour says
concerning *Lazarus*, *This Sickness* is not
unto Death; ch. xi. of *St. John's Gospel*;
ver. 4; So, in the *spiritual* sense, the same
Apostle *St. John*, in his 1st Epistle, speaks
of *Sins*, which, according as there be
Any or *No Hope* of mens recovering from
them, either *are* or *are not* unto *Death*;
1 Joh. v. 16.

2. A *Second Observation* arising from
our Saviour's manner of expressing him-
self in the Text, is; that *Repentance*, is
not an *Original* and *Primary* Duty of
Religion; but a Duty, only of *secondary*
intention,

SERM. intention, and of *consequential* Obligation :

VIII. Our Lord *came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* The Original Duty of all rational Creatures, is to *obey* the Commandments of God : And *Such* Intelligent Beings, as have *always* lived in obedience to God's Commands, are *not* obliged to the Duty of *Repentance*. It is *Sin* only, that brought in the obligation to this *secondary* and *consequential* Duty. And to those who *Have* sinned, This Duty is of *Such a* Nature, that it is a particular *Privilege* to them to be *permitted* to perform it ; *Acts* xi. 18. When the *Jewish* Christians at *Jerusalem*, first heard of the Apostles being *authorized* to preach the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, they said, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto life.* Granting *Repentance*, does not signify, as Some Moderns have understood it, God's *working Repentance* in men, or *operating* it upon them ; but it means, his graciously *allowing* them the Benefit of *Repentance*, or, his accepting *their Repentance* so as to render it available *unto Pardon*. Among such frail and degenerate Creatures, as *Men* in
this



this *present State* are ; there are *None*, in *strictness* of Speech, *free from Sin* ; and consequently *None*, but what are obliged to this *Duty of Repentance*. Nevertheless, according to the gracious estimation of things in the Gospel, and according to the more usual acceptation of words in Scripture ; they who, allowing for the general frailties and infirmities of humane nature, sincerely endeavour, in the constant course and tenour of their Actions, to live in habitual Obedience to the Commands of God ; are stiled *Righteous* in *such* a manner, as that our Saviour came not, *comparatively* speaking, to call *Them* to Repentance. In the prayer of *Manasseh* King of *Judah*, we find this Notion expressed in very strong Terms : *Thou, O Lord*, says he, *that art the God of the Just, hast not appointed Repentance to the Just, as to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, which have not sinned against thee ; but-----of thine infinite Mercies thou hast appointed Repentance unto Sinners ; that they may be saved*. The word, *Sinners*, here, it is plain, is not used in *That* sense, wherein *All men* are declared to be Sinners ; but in
That

S E R M. *That sense, wherein the Scripture declares*
 VIII. *that the Wicked are an abomination to*
 ~~~~~ *the Lord, and them that work iniquity his*  
*Soul hateth. Against these persons it is,*  
*that the Wrath of God is denounced with*  
*indignation, and the Threatnings of his*  
 1 Tim. i 9. *Law are thundred with Severity. The*  
*Law (says St. Paul) is not made for a*  
*righteous man, (for against such, there is*  
*no law; Gal. v. 23;) but it is made for*  
*the lawless and disobedient, for the ungod-*  
*ly and for Sinners, for the unholy and pro-*  
*fane,-----for man-slayers, for whoremon-*  
*gers-----for Liars, for perjured persons,*  
*and if there be any Other thing that is*  
*contrary to sound doctrine. In comparison*  
*with These; men who love Truth, and*  
*do Righteousness, and sincerely fear God,*  
*however they be encompassed with many*  
*infirmities, are yet stiled in Scripture not*  
*only just and righteous, but even perfect*  
*in their generation, walking in All the*  
*commandments of the Lord blameless; Is-*  
*raelites indeed, in whom there is No Guile;*  
*just persons, that need no Repentance:*  
*and of whom our Lord in the text de-*  
*clares, that he came not to call Them to*  
*Repentance.*

*Repentance.* There is a Repentance, to S E R M. VIII.  
 which even the *Best* of men are continu-  
 ally obliged ; a Sense of their unworthi-  
 ness before God ; an acknowledgment of  
 their Weaknesses and Follies ; a conti-  
 nual uninterrupted Endeavour to amend  
 what they find amiss in themselves, and  
 to improve more and more unto perfec-  
 tion. But *This* is not That Repentance,  
 to which our Saviour came to call *Sin-*  
*ners* : That *Total Change* of Life and  
 Manners, of which when our Lord saw  
 an instance in *Zaccheus*, he said, *This day is*  
*Salvation come unto this house* ; and in de-  
 scribing of which, he calls it a *New Birth*,  
 a being Born again of *Water and of the*  
*Spirit*. In contradiction to which, and  
 under the very same figure of expression,  
 That *perpetual* Amendment of infirmities,  
 which is the Duty of *Good* men, may well  
 be represented in the words of our Sa-  
 viour to *St. Peter* ; Joh. xiii. 10 ; *He that*  
*is washed, needeth not, save to wash his*  
*feet, but is clean every whit.*

3. A *Third* thing observable in our Sa-  
 viour's manner of expressing himself in  
 the Text, is the just and sharp *Reproof*  
 contained

SERM. contained in this his Answer to the Proud  
 VIII. and Hypocritical *Pharisees*. They were  
 ~~~~~ *Whole*, it seems, and therefore had no need  
 of a *Physician*; They were very *righteous*,
 they thought, and therefore had no need
 of being invited to *Repentance*. They
 were the persons, who St. *Luke* tells
 us; *chap. 18, 9*; *trusted in themselves that*
they were righteous, and despised Others;
 And therefore our Lord rebuked their
 Pride, by his Parable of the *Pharisee* and
 the *Publican*; telling them that the peni-
 tent *Publican* went down to his house
 justified, rather than the Boasting *Pharisee*;
For every one that exalteth himself, shall be
abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall
be exalted. They were the same persons,
 to whom the same Evangelist tells us our
 Lord said upon another occasion; *chap. xvi.*
15; *ye are they which justify yourselves be-*
fore Men, but God knoweth your Hearts;
For That which is highly esteemed amongst
Men, is abomination in the Sight of God.
 And thus likewise in the words of the
 Text, when the same Hypocrites were
 finding fault with *Jesus*, for keeping com-
 pany with Publicans and Sinners, which
 They thought it beneath *Themselves* to do;
 the

the Answer he made them, contains in it S E R M.
VIII.
this Severe Sting ; *Ye* who fancy your-
selves *whole*, what need have ye of a Phy-
sician ? *Ye* who trust in yourselves that
ye *are righteous*, what need have ye of
being invited to *Repentance* ?

THESE are the *Observations* naturally
arising from the several *particular* expres-
sions made use of in the Text. That
which remains is, to consider, in the

II. *Second* place, the general Doctrine
of *Repentance*, as here laid down by our
Lord : The Design of his Preaching, was
to call *Sinners to Repentance*.

GOD being the *Author* and *Preserver*
of our Being, and our Supreme Gover-
nour ; it is manifest that his *Will*, how-
ever made known to us, whether by *na-
tural Reason*, or by additional *Revelation*,
is the *Rule* and *Law* of our Actions.
This *Law* or *Rule*, all men, as they are
rational Creatures, are originally obliged
to obey at *all times* and in *all particulars* ;
nor can there in *any case*, in the nature
and reason of things, be *any Excuse* or
Dispensation for transgressing it. Never-
theless *in fact*, in this present state, such

S E R M. is the Frailty and Infirmary of our Na-
 VIII. ture, such is the Blindness and Errone-
 ousness of our Understandings, such the
 Falseness and Corruption of our Wills,
 such the Power and Headiness of our
 Passions, such the Influences of innume-
 rable Temptations surrounding us in a
 degenerate and unrighteous World; that
 there is *no man liveth, and sinneth not.*
 Now of *Sin*, in proportion to the several
 degrees of its aggravation, the natural
 and just *Effect* is *Fear*, and *Looking for of*
Judgement, and mens being consequently
all their Life-time subject to Bondage; Heb.
 ii. 15. By this Fear of the Divine Dis-
 pleasure, joined with a Sense of past Fol-
 lies, and of the unreasonableness of Sin
 in the nature of the thing itself; they who
 have in them a root of *general* good Dis-
 position, and have not been corrupted
 with long and fixt *Habits* of Vice, are
 apt to be led to *Repentance*: And the con-
 sideration of the nature and perfections
 of God, That *Goodness and Mercy* which
 the *Light of Nature* teaches us must be
 found in the most perfect Being, gives
 them very reasonable Grounds of *Hope*,
 that

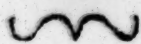
that their Repentance and Amendment shall not be in vain. By These considerations, many worthy and well-disposed Minds, even in the *Heathen World* itself, regulated their Behaviour ; and, forsaking the Corruptions of the World around them, made very great Improvements in the ways of Virtue. Nevertheless, since a man's performing his Duty for the *future*, is nothing more, but doing what is *Then* his Duty to do, and makes no Expiation for *Past* Offences ; there could not but remain upon the Minds of Penitents still *Some* Uncertainty and uneasy Doubts. In revealing himself to the people of the *Jews*, God was pleased by *degrees* to clear this matter ; *ascertaining* the Hopes, and *removing* the Suspicions, of *natural Reason*, by express *Promises* and *Declarations* of Mercy : Appointing *first*, in the *Law* itself, *Sacrifices* for *All* Offences, *except* the most *presumptuous* : *Afterwards* signifying, by his *Prophets*, that, upon a *real Forsaking* and *effectual Amendment* even of *Presumptuous* Faults, he would accept the *Sacrifice of a broken Spirit, a broken and contrite heart* he

S E R M.
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SERM.

VIII.

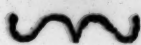


would not despise : Inviting men, as in the prophecy of *Isaiah*; ch. lv. 7; *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his Thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*: And intimating, as in the liiid chapter of the same Book, that he had appointed an universal propitiation, to be revealed in his due season, who was to be wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities, and by whose stripes we should be healed. At length, in the fulness of Time, by the actual Coming of Christ, this great Dispensation was completely opened; and *Repentance and Remission of Sins*, was commanded to be preached, in *His* name, unto all the Nations of the Earth. *Come unto Me*, says he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest*. And again: *Let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*. He has given us assurance, that God wills not that *Any* should perish, but that *All* should come to *Repentance*: Nay, that as a Shepherd rejoices

joices over a Sheep that had been lost ; so *it is not the Will of our Father which is in Heaven, that One of these little ones should perish.* Further ; that *there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over One Sinner that repenteth ;* Nay, that *Joy shall be in Heaven over One Sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no Repentance.* The Meaning is ; not that *Repentance* is in itself more, or so much valuable as *Innocence* ; or that a *returning Sinner* is more acceptable, or so much acceptable to God, as One that *never Sinned* : But that, in like manner as either a man's *Self*, or his *Friend's*, having escaped any extraordinary and very imminent *Danger*, causes a greater and more sensible present *Pleasure*, than his having never fallen into any such danger at all ; and yet it does not at all follow, that *Danger* is in any case *desirable* : So it may very reasonably and consistently be apprehended, how the *Repentance* of a Sinner may cause greater *immediate joy* in the presence both of Men and Angels ; than the *steddy Perseverance* of One who, by the regular and uniform Practice of all

S E R M.

VIII.

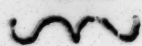


Virtue, has nevertheless deserved a far higher degree of *settled Esteem and Approbation*. Now This authentick declaration made by our Saviour, of the acceptableness of True Repentance in the Sight of God ; is *That Glad Tidings*, which the word *Gospel*, [*Εὐαγγέλιον*,] in its original Signification, properly denotes ; That publication of *Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards men*, which the Angel, in his congratulation to the Shepherds, calls *Tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people* ; and which the Apostle St Paul styles by the general name, of the *Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*. The Means, by which the Benefit of this gracious Dispensation is originally applied to Sinners, is *Baptism* : By which, they who were converted from unrighteous ways thro' the *Apostles* Preaching of the Gospel, having *their Hearts* (as the Scripture expresses it) *sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their Bodies washed with pure Water*, received assurance of the Pardon of their *past* Sins, and entred into a Solemn obligation to obey the Commands of God for the *future* ; And by which *at all times,*



times, they who are initiated into Christ's religion, are *admitted* to the gracious Terms of the Gospel-covenant, and *obliged* to live in obedience to those Terms: For the *Baptism* which *saves us*, the Apostle expressly declares, is not *the putting away the filth of the flesh*, but the Answer of a good conscience towards God. To those who *renounce* this Baptism by *total* and *final* Apostacy, the Benefit thereof is entirely vacated: For the *One Sacrifice* of Christ *once offered for us for ever*, being *totally and finally* rejected; *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin*, but a certain *fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversary*. As to those who *never totally* apostatize, but yet, notwithstanding their *profession of Christianity*, fall into the habitual practice of *Any Wickedness* or *Debauchery*; their Sin, without doubt, is far more inexcusable; their Hearts more hardened; their Return to their Duty, much more difficult; than That of *such Sinners* mentioned in the Text, whom our Saviour came to call originally to *Repentance*. For it is *better* for men *never to*

S E R M.  
VIII.



SERM. have known the way of righteousness, than  
 VIII. after they have known it, to turn from the  
 Holy Commandment delivered unto them. Nevertheless, even to such Offenders as These, however unworthy, there still remains a gracious Call to Repentance ; and the invitation which God has made by his Son in the Gospel, he in abundant mercy continues to repeat, Such persons, are to be rebuked very sharply, but not driven absolutely to Despair. That which is lame, ought not to be turned quite out of the way, but that it rather be healed. St Paul delivered a great Sinner unto Satan, to the end that his Spirit might finally be saved in the day of the Lord : and gives caution, least even such an one should be swallowed up of much Sorrow. He speaks of many that had sinned already, even in the Instances of great Crimes ; and threatens them upon Supposition they had not yet repented. The Apostle St James declares likewise ; If any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him ; let him know, that He who converteth a Sinner from the Errour of his ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a multitude

*tude of Sins.* And our Saviour himself, S E R M. VIII. speaking even of *Great Corrupters* of religion, threatens that he will *cast them into a bed of Sickness, and kill their children* (that is, their Followers) *with death*, except *they repent of their Deeds*. Indeed, in cases of *This* nature, where men, notwithstanding their Knowledge of the Truth, have been guilty of Great and Presumptuous Wickedness; their *Repentance* ought to be *very exemplary*, and their *Amendment* thoroughly and conspicuously *effectual*. To *these* persons, the Scripture says; *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your Joy to Heaviness; Humble yourselves in the Sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.* But for the *smaller* Failings, Infirmities and Surprises, incident even to sincere and good men through the whole course of their lives; for the forgiveness of *these*, there is evidently *continual* provision made in the *whole Tenour* of the Gospel. Our Saviour directs us to pray *daily*, for the forgiveness of *Trespases* of *This* kind; and, by commanding us to forgive *each Other*



SERM. *Other* such Trespases, not only till Seven  
 VIII. times, but even till Seventy times Seven;  
 gives reason to those who constantly and  
 sincerely *indeavour* to obey his Will, to  
 hope for proportionable favour at the  
 hands of God.

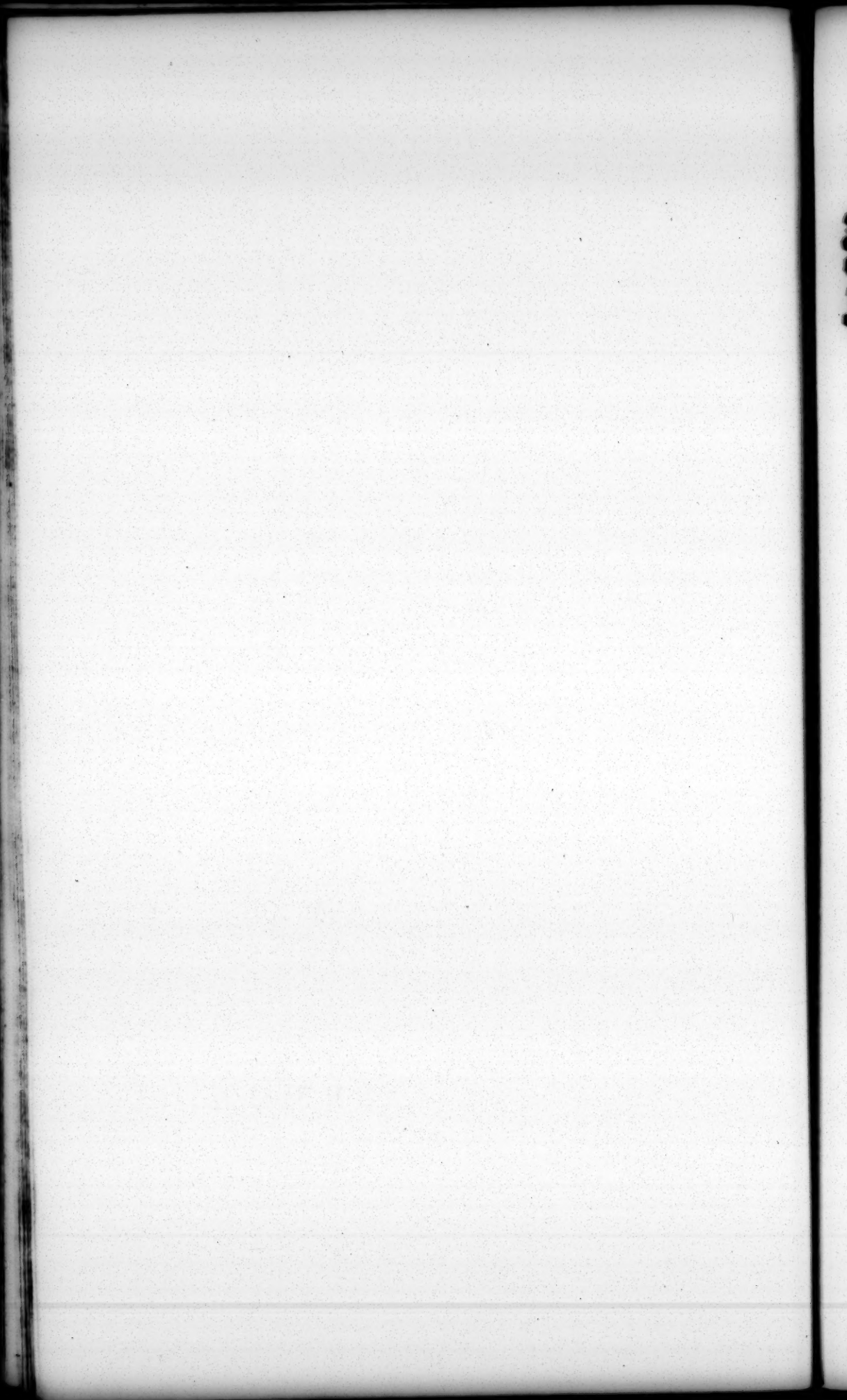
THE *Inferences* arising from the foregoing Doctrine of Repentance, are:

1<sup>st</sup>. FROM what has been said, appears the Folly of those corrupt Practices, of *Confessions, Penances, Absolutions*, and the like; introduced in the Church of Rome, (instead of true Amendment of life,) by the Vanity and Ambition of Men. For the Texts, concerning *retaining and forgiving* of Sins, on a misunderstanding of which these corruptions have been founded; do not, in their true Meaning, put it into *Any* man's power, to sit in the Seat of God; but only appoint and authorize them *from* God, to preach and explain That Doctrine *unto* Men, by the *Terms* of which they must finally be judged.

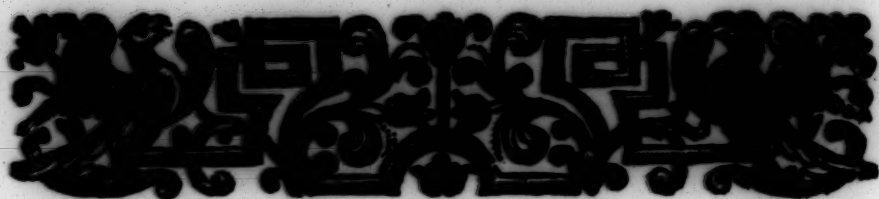
2<sup>dly</sup>. FROM what has been said about the nature of True Repentance, it appears; that, among *Protestants*, and  
 Chri-

Christians of *all* denominations whatsoe-  
ver ; *Confessions of Sin* ; and *professions*  
*of Repentance*, made daily in our *Prayers*  
to God ; if they be only *formal* and *inef-*  
*fectual*, and produce not *real Amendment*  
of life ; are altogether as vain and useless,  
as the *Popish* *Confessions* made to Men.  
For to pray continually that our *Life here-*  
*after may be pure and holy*, and yet at the  
same time return daily to the commission  
of *known Sins* ; is the highest hypocrisy  
and mockery of God. Concerning *these*  
persons it is, that our Saviour declares ;  
*Luke xiii. 24 ; Many, I say unto you, will*  
*Seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*  
They will *Seek*, not in the way of true  
virtue and righteousness of life, but in  
ways which they hope may be substituted  
in its place. That is, in the expression of  
our Saviour, they will build their House  
upon the *Sand*, and not upon a *Rock*.

S E R M.  
VIII.  
~







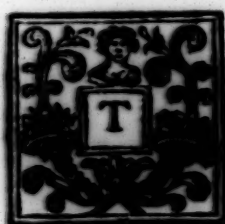
# S E R M O N IX.

The Excellency of Moral Qualifications.

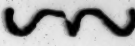


A C T S xi. 24.

*For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.*



HERE is nothing in nature S E R M.  
IX.  
more amiable, than the character of a truly *Good* man ;  
a Man, whose principal Business and Pleasure is to make  
all Men easy, with whom he has any Concern, in the *present* life ; and to promote, as far as in Him lies, their Happiness likewise in That which is *to come*.  
*Other Qualifications*, have their *Value* ; and do, in their proportion, merit a just degree  
of

SERM. of Esteem. Great Knowledge and Abilities, every where necessarily command  
 IX.  Respect. Great Actions never fail to fill Men with Admiration, and to procure Applause. But of *all* Characters, That of *Goodness* is the most *lovely*; and approaches nearest to the Similitude of a *Divine* Perfection. *God* is the *Fountain of Goodness*, from which flows all the Happiness in the whole Creation: And there is no one Perfection in the Divine Nature, which it is *so much* our *Duty* and our *Glory* to imitate. He who most excels in This particular character, has the most of the *Divine Likeness*, that Man in this Mortal state can possibly arrive at; And therefore in the description given of *St Barnabas* in my Text, the expressions are used as Synonymous and of the *same* Meaning, that he was *a Good Man*, and *full of the Holy Ghost*.

THE *Occasion* of the Character here given of *Barnabas*, was the *Concern and Desire* he showed, that the Benefit of True Religion might spread *far* in the World; that Men of *all* Nations might become partakers of the gracious Mercy of

of God declared in the Gospel, by being S E R M.  
brought to Repentance for the Remission IX.  
of Sins. *Barnabas* was the *first* person  
who ventured to introduce *Paul* among  
the Disciples at *Jerusalem*, immediately  
after his Conversion; when the rest of  
the Christians *were all afraid of him, and*  
*believed not that he was a Disciple*; Acts  
ix. 26. Afterwards, when upon occasion  
of the persecution that arose about *Stephen*,  
the Disciples which were scattered abroad  
from *Jerusalem* for fear of the *Jews*, did  
some of them speak unto the *Grecians*,  
*preaching the Lord Jesus*; ch. xi. 19, 20.  
*Barnabas* was the person chosen to be  
sent forth from the Church in *Jerusalem*,  
that he should go as far as *Antioch*; ver. 22.  
*Who* when he came, and had seen the grace  
of God, was glad, and exhorted them all,  
that with Purpose of Heart they would  
cleave unto the Lord; ver. 23. And then  
it follows, in the words of my Text;  
*For he was a good man, and full of the*  
*Holy Ghost.*

'T is plain this character given in the  
Text to *Barnabas*, was intended as a de-  
scription of an excellent person; of a per-  
son



S E R M. son *excellent*, not so much upon account  
 IX. of his *miraculous Gifts*, as of his *Moral Qualifications*. And therefore the character deserves to be *particularly* considered, as a *Pattern* and *Example* to All who are desirous to improve in Christian Virtue. For though the Disciples of Christ are not in *All Ages* indued with *miraculous Powers*, yet they may and ought *always* to endeavour after those *Moral Qualifications*; which are, in Scripture-language, the  
 Eph. v. 9. *Fruits of the Spirit*; and, in St Paul's  
 1 Cor. xii. opinion, the *more excellent* ones too.

31.

T H E word, *good*, in this character of a *good* man, is used sometimes in a way expressive of *Virtue in general*, as opposed to *all Wickedness* or *Vice*; and sometimes as denoting a *particular Kind* or *Degree* of *Virtue*, as distinguished by way of Excellency above *other* Virtues. In the *former* sense of the word, a *good man* stands opposed to a *vicious* or *bad* man: In the *latter* sense, a *good man* stands distinguished, by way of Eminence or Superiority, above *other* even *just* and *righteous* persons.

I. T H E

1. The word, *Good*, is sometimes ex-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
 pressive of *Virtue in general*, as opposed <sup>IX.</sup>  
 to *all Wickedness* or *Vice*. In *This* sense;  
 what *Good* is, every one knows: It needs  
 not be defined or explained in Many  
 Words; but every man's own Mind and  
 Conscience may be appealed to, to tell  
 him *what* it is. It is not any thing that  
 is disputed or controverted among Men,  
 which Some call Good, and Others Evil;  
 but what Mankind is well agreed in,  
 and what even the Light of Nature it-  
 self universally approves. It is *real* and  
*substantial* in the nature of things, so as  
 not to be varied by any external Change  
 of Time or Circumstances: And it is *un-*  
*questionable* and *indisputable*, so as to be  
 acknowledged by men of all Parties and  
 of all Opinions, how how much soever they  
 may differ among themselves in Other  
 matters, and how little Regard soever  
 they may in Practice pay even to this  
 undisputed Goodness itself. *Whatsoever* <sup>Phil. iv. 8</sup>  
*things are True, whatsoever things are*  
*Honest, whatsoever things are Just, what-*  
*soever things are Pure, whatsoever things*  
*are Lovely, whatsoever things are of good*

S E R M. *Report ; if there be any Virtue, and if*  
 XI. *there be any Praise ; these are the things,*  
 ~~~~~ *in which This Goodness consists. In the*  
Old Testament, it is thus described by the
Prophet ; Mic. vi. 8 ; He hath showed
thee, O man, what is Good ; And what
doth the Lord require of thee, but to do
justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk
humbly with thy God ? In the New Testa-
 ment, it is by St. Paul expressed thus : that
 Tit. ii. 12. *denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we*
should live soberly, righteously and godly,
in this present World, under a sense and
expectation of a Judgment to come. And
by St. Peter in the following manner ;
1 Pet. iii, 10 ; That a Man refrain his
Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they
speak no Guile ; That he eschew evil, and
do good ; that he seek peace, and ensue
it ; ----- for who is he that will harm you,
if ye be Thus followers of that which is
Good ? ver. 13. This general Practice
of Virtue, which determines the person's
whole character, and denominates a Good
Man ; is what our Saviour represents in
his Parable under the Similitude of Good
Ground, wherein the Seed sown takes
 Root

Root and grows, and brings forth Fruit, S E R M.
 being neither hindred by Rocks and want of IX.
 depth of Earth, nor choaked with Weeds, 
 nor scorched up and withered by the
 Heat of the Sun: That is, when nei-
 ther Irresoluteness of Temper, nor Fear
 of Persecutions, nor the Temptations and
 Allurements of Profit or Pleasure, the
 Cares and Business, the Deceits or En-
 ticements of a corrupt World, withdraw
 a Man from the uniform Pursuit and
 Practice of what is just and right. This
 is *That Sincerity*, or (in our Saviour's lan-
 guage) *That Honest and Good Heart*, which Luke viii.
 in the Scripture-style is opposed to *Hypo-* 15.
crisy. For *Hypocrisy*, in the language of
 the sacred Writers, does not generally sig-
 nify a solemn and formal *Pretence to Re-*
ligion without *Any real Belief of Religion*
 at all. This sort of Hypocrites, are but
Few in number; and no Man can be
 guilty in *This* kind, without expressly and
 distinctly *condemning himself* in every
 part of his *own* Pretences. But the *Hy-*
pocrisy much more frequently spoken of
 in Scripture, and so generally opposed to
real Goodness; is *That Hypocrisy*, in
 VOL. III. O 2 which

SERM. which Men no less usually impose upon

IX. *Themselves, than Others; deceiving their own Hearts,* as St. *James* expresses it; ch. i. 26. It is *That Deceit*, by which Men fancy that they can become acceptable to God, by any external Profession of Religion, by Zeal for particular uncertain Opinions, by an exact Observation of any outward Ceremonies, by constant Devotion even towards God himself; without becoming really *Good Men*; without governing their own unreasonable Passions; without being just, beneficent, and charitable, towards All Mankind; in a word, without living in the Practice of those Moral Virtues, which are the eternal and unalterable Commands of God, and which are the ultimate End of every religious Institution. The only *Evidence* therefore, or certain *Mark*, whereby That *Sincerity* which denominates a really *Good Man*, can be distinguished from such Profession of Religion, as the Scripture deems hypocritical; is when the Fruits of it appear in a *general* and *habitual* Influence over *all* his Actions: When the Arguments of Reason and Religion, are
not

not only heard with Pleasure, and produce perhaps sudden and real Effects, in the Times and Places of publick Devotion; (which is what our Saviour expresses by *receiving the Word with joy*, like Seed speedily springing up in shallow ground, without having *Root* in itself;) But the true Evidence of *Sincere Goodness* is, when the Considerations of Reason and Religion influence Men habitually in the whole Course and Method of *Common Life*, in their *Business* and *Transactions* of all kinds, in their very *Freedom*s and *Diversions* themselves, in circumstances of *Temptation*, and in Cases attended with *Difficulties*, as well as in Seasons of professed Devotion: When the Precepts of Virtue, and the Doctrines of Practice, which true Religion teaches, are *imbibed*, *digested*, and converted as it were into the *Food and Nourishment* of Life: Which is what our Saviour, in the *Sixth* chapter of *St. John*, calls *eating his Flesh*, and *drinking his Blood*: Just in the same sense, as *Wisdom* is introduced speaking; *Ecclus.* xxiv. 21; *He that eateth me, shall yet be Hungry*; and *He that drinketh me, shall yet be Thirsty*.

SERM. 2. BESIDES this *larger* and more usual
 IX. Sense of the word, *Good*, expressing *Virtue in general*, as opposed to *all Wickedness* or *Vice*; there is *another* sense of the word, as denoting a *particular Kind* or *Degree of Virtue*, by way of Excellency above *other* Virtues. And in *This* sense, a *good* man stands distinguished, by way of Eminence or Superiority, above *other* even *just* and *righteous* persons. *Goodness* in *This* sense, is universal Virtue, joined with a *singular* degree of *Benignity* and *Beneficence* in *particular*.

IN the describing or taking account of Actions; the phrase, *doing of Good*, is frequently applied *peculiarly* to the Virtue of *Beneficence* or *Charity*. Thus *Heb. xiii. 16*; *To do good, and to communicate, forget not*. Again; *1 Tim. vi. 17*; *Charge them who are Rich in This world,----- that they do Good, that they be rich in Good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*. And from hence, in the Characters of Persons, a *Good man* very often signifies, not only One who leads in *general* a *virtuous* Life, but who moreover is *particularly* eminent for *Benignity*
 of

of Temper ; One who always *does more* S E R M.
for the Benefit of Others, than could in IX.
 strictness of justice be demanded of him ;
 and *exacts less* for himself *from* Others,
 than in strict Right appears to be his due ;
 and readily takes *greater Pains* for his
 Neighbour's Advantage, and voluntarily
 undergoes *more Troubles and Difficulties*
 for the Good of Mankind, than, accord-
 ing to the common Measures and Esti-
 mation of Duty, he could be understood
 to be obliged to. Concerning *This* Cha-
 racter it is, that St. *Paul* declares, *Rom.*
v. 7 ; Scarcely for a Righteous man will
one die ; yet peradventure for a Good man,
some would even dare to die. And in
This sense, the character of *Good* seems
 to be given to *Barnabas* in the Text.
He was the person who *first* ventured to
 introduce *Paul* among the Disciples at
Jerusalem, when the rest were all afraid
 of him, and believed not that he was a
 Disciple ; *ch. ix. 26.* And *He* being the
 person chosen by the Church at *Jeru-*
salem, to travel as far as *Antioch*, and
 confirm the Faith of those *Grecian* or
Gentile Converts, which had been brought

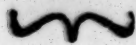
S E R M. over to Christianity by the preaching of
 IX. Some of those Disciples, who, upon the
 ~~~~~ Persecution that arose about *Stephen*, were  
*scattered abroad from Jerusalem* for fear  
 of the *Jews*; he performed this Office  
 with a singularly good and charitable  
 Concern for the Happiness of Mankind.  
 Having *seen the Grace of God*, that is,  
 having seen Evidences of God's universal  
 Mercy and Compassion towards the *Gen-  
 tiles* as well as *Jews*, he *was glad, and  
 exhorted them All, that with Purpose of  
 Heart they would cleave unto the Lord*;  
*ch. xi. 23: For he was a Good man, and  
 full of the Holy Ghost.*

CONCERNING the latter part of This  
 character, *full of the Holy Ghost*, it is to  
 be observed, that the *Holy Ghost*, in Scrip-  
 ture-language, sometimes signifies the *Per-  
 son* of the Holy Ghost, sometimes his *Mi-  
 raculous Gifts*, and sometimes the *Moral  
 Effects and Influences* of the Doctrine  
 delivered to us by the Spirit of God. In  
 either of the *two former* senses, a Prophet  
 is spoken of as being *full of the Holy  
 Ghost*, when he is actually *inspired* by  
 him, or miraculously *conducted and direct-  
 ed*



ed by him either in *Words* or *Actions*. SERM. IX.  
 Thus *Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost,*  
*was led by the Spirit into the Wildernej;*  
 Luke iv. 1: And *Stephen, being full of the*  
*Holy Ghost,-----saw the Glory of God;*  
 Acts vii. 55. In the latter sense of the  
 word, a man is then said to be *full of the*  
*Holy Ghost*, when his mind, under the  
*Moral Influences* of the Spirit of God,  
 and of *the Doctrine which is according to* 1 Tim. vi.  
*Godliness*, is, in an eminent manner, *zea-* 3.  
*lous* for the promoting of Truth, and for  
 the Practice of good Works. Thus the  
 Seven Deacons appointed by the Apo-  
 stles; *Acts vi. 3: were men of honest Re-*  
*port, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom;*  
 Men of *honest Report*, that is, of known  
 integrity, of virtuous and upright cha-  
 racter, and of exemplary Zeal. And in  
 the same sense, *Barnabas* is in my Text  
 described to have been a *Good man, Full*  
*of the Holy Ghost and of Faith.* Upon a  
 like account, and after the same manner  
 of speaking, very *wicked persons*, or men  
 intending to attempt any very *wicked*  
*enterprize*, are in Scripture represented as  
 being *filled with the Evil Spirit.* Thus  
 when

S E R M. when *Ananias* had projected within himself to *defraud* the Apostles, St. *Peter*

IV.  reproves him in the following manner ; *Acts* v. 3 ; *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart, to lie to the Holy Ghost ?* And when *Judas* resolved in his own Mind to betray our Lord ; then, the Evangelist tells us, *Satan entered into him, Luke* xxii. 3. The Meaning of which is not, that the *Thoughts* of the *Men*, were the *Actions* of the *Devil* ; But, that submitting to Temptation upon *ill* Principles, is being subject to the *Devil* ; in like manner as acting upon *good* Principles, is being under the Government of *God*, under the guidance and influence of the *Spirit of Holiness*.

THE words of the Text being thus explained, it is obvious from thence to observe,

1<sup>st</sup>, T H A T, with regard to a person's *moral* or *religious* character ; being a *good man*, and being *full of the Holy Ghost*, are *one* and the *same* thing. With regard to the visible *Works* or *Operations* of the *Holy Ghost*, the case is very different. A man might *speak with the tongues*

*tongues of Men, and of Angels; might have the Gift of Prophecy; might understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; might have all Faith, so that he could remove Mountains; and yet possibly at the same time, for want of real Goodness and true Virtue, might, in the religious estimation of things, be (as St. Paul expresses it) absolutely Nothing. And our Saviour himself expressly mentions Some, who should be able to plead that they had prophesied in his name, and in his Name had cast out Devils, and in his Name done many wonderful works; and yet, saith he, will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. The Reason of the difference, is plain: Because these external miraculous Works of the Holy Ghost, being of Use only for the conviction of men's Understandings, which is not necessarily followed with a virtuous disposition of the Will; hence these outward Gifts may very possibly be found in an unrighteous person, who is not himself influenced in his own Practice by the Arguments wherewith he preaches*

S E R M.

IX.

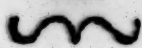
Matt. vii.

21.



S E R M.

IX.



preaches to *Others*. But the *internal* Effects of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the person's *own Mind*; the Moral Effects of the *Motives and Arguments of Religion* taught by the Holy Ghost, and of the *Assistances* afforded by him; these cannot possibly be *separate* or *different* from true *Virtue*, because *Virtue* is itself *essentially* the End of Religion, and the ultimate Design of all religious Influences. And therefore to be in *This* sense full of the Holy Ghost, and to be a good man, must necessarily be *one* and the *same thing*.

2dly, FROM what has been said, we may observe; that *moral Virtues*, and what the Scripture calls the *Fruits of the Spirit*, are *one and the same thing* under different Denominations. *The Fruit of the Spirit*, saith St. Paul, is in all *Goodness and Righteousness and Truth*; Eph. v. 9. And again; Gal. v. 22; *The Fruit of the Spirit*, is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith* [Fidelity,] *Meekness, Temperance*; *Against Such, there is no Law*. These things, when considered in *themselves*, in their own

own *absolute* and *intrinſick* nature, as be- S E R M.  
 ing *Dispoſitions* of Mind *eſſentially* and IX.  
 unalterably good; are ſtyled *Virtues*. When  
 conſiderd with regard to their *Effects*, in  
 the viſible *Actions* and *Practice* of men;  
 they are called *Morality*. When conſi-  
 dered with reſpect to the *Root* or *Spring*,  
 the *Fountain* or *Principle* from which  
 they flow; namely, a right *Senſe* of the  
*Reason* and *Truth* of Things, and a juſt  
 Regard to *God* the Judge of all; they are  
 then ſtyled *Religion*. Laſtly, when con-  
 ſidered with reſpect to the *extraordinary*  
 Supports they receive from the Revela-  
 tion of the *Gospel* in particular, as being  
 therein explained with *clearer* and more  
*diſtinct* Declarations, inforced with *ſtrong-*  
*er* and more *powerful* Motives, encour-  
 aged and promoted with all the *Helps*  
 and *Aſſiſtances* of the *Spirit* of *God*; in  
 This reſpect, they are called *Fruits* of the  
*Spirit*.

3dly, B Y This Rule therefore, may ea-  
 ſily be diſcovered and reproved, every  
 kind of *Enthuſiaſm* and *Superſtition*.  
 Whatever tends not to *promote* real Vir-  
 tue and Goodneſs; much more, what-  
 ever

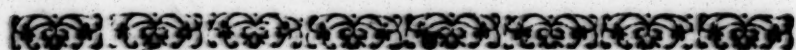
S E R M. ever (under the appearance of Religion)  
X. tends to *destroy* Virtue and Goodness; is  
the Produce either of *Atheism*, or of *En-  
thusiasm* and *Superstition*. The *Spirit of  
God*, is the *Spirit of Holiness* and *Goodness*;  
and therefore whosoever lives in the Prac-  
tice of *Any Vice*, is certainly, in the re-  
ligious sense, void of the *Spirit of God*.  
All other Marks whatsoever, of *having the  
Spirit*; are but *vain* and *enthusiastical*. If  
a man could *speak with the Tongues of Men  
and Angels*, (as St Paul expresses it,) and  
*had all Faith*, so that he could work *All  
Miracles*; and be not a *virtuous* man; All  
This would be only the Operation of the  
Spirit of God *by Him*, for the conviction  
of *Others*; but *To himself*, of no Advan-  
tage, any more than to a *Sounding Brass*  
or a *tinkling Cymbal*.





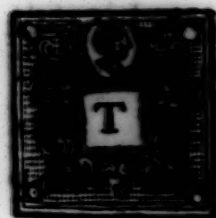
# S E R M O N X.

Of H U M I L I T Y.



LUK. XIV. II.

*For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*



HERE is no Virtue in hu- S E R M.  
man Life, of more universal X.  
Usefulness than *Humility*; and  
yet none more difficult to be  
*practised* by a man's *self*, or  
to be rightly *stated* and defined to *others*.  
*Pride* grows upon Men insensibly by im-  
perceptible degrees, and creeps in unta-  
ken

S E R M. ken notice of upon innumerable Occa-  
 X. sions, and veils itself often under an af-  
 fected Appearance even of *Humility* itself.  
 For *true Humility*, as it is hard to define,  
 so it is not always easy to know when a  
 man has it : And whilst it is frequently  
 described to be man's having in ap-  
 pearance a meaner Opinion of himself,  
 than it is *possible* for him to have in  
 reality ; ( for no man can *really think* that  
 of himself, which he *knows* at the same  
 time *not to be true* of himself ; ) it hap-  
 pens, not uncommonly, that there may  
 be great *Pride*, in a man's *pretending* so  
 to think of himself, as he knows every  
 body believes there is no just reason to  
 think of him ; and that there may be  
 more and truer *Humility* in *Another* per-  
 son, who without either *affected Humility*  
 or *real Pride*, so thinks of himself as he  
 ought to think, and so behaves himself  
 as becomes his proper Station and Employ-  
 ment in the World. For *true Humility*  
 consists, not in *Imagination*, but in *Acti-*  
*on* ; not in men's *appearing* to *think* ill  
 of themselves, but in *behaving* themselves  
*well* ; it consists in carrying themselves  
 modestly

modestly in the Performance of their pre- S E R M.  
sent Duty, not assuming to themselves X.  
any thing above the character of their pro-  
per Station, not putting *themselves* for-  
ward in an eager and indecent manner,  
but, by the Practice of real and useful  
Virtues, causing *Others* to be desirous of  
their Advancement in the World. This  
is the Behaviour of True Merit; and the  
Method, which, in the Nature of Things,  
in the Judgement of the Wisest Men, and  
by the Appointment of God himself, leads  
modest and unaffected Virtue, to real  
Honour, and to a settled and established  
Esteem. *For whosoever exalteth himself,*  
*shall be abased; and he that humbleth*  
*himself shall be exalted.* In the following  
Discourse upon which Words, I shall 1<sup>st</sup>  
endeavour to show *what* True Humility  
is, and wherein it consists; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, pro-  
pose some Arguments to perswade men to  
the Practice of it. Under which *same*  
Heads, it will appear at the same Time  
what *Pride* is, and by what Arguments  
men are to be warned against falling into it.

1<sup>st</sup>, I am to consider *what* True Humi-  
lity is, and wherein it consists. And here,



S E R M. because the Circumstances of men are  
 X. infinitely various; and the Practice of  
 every moral Virtue, is diversified in as many different manners, as the Circumstances of the Case wherein it is to be exercised; therefore either *general* Rules cannot be given at all, or, if they be, yet commonly they are but of small Use, because they are lost in the endless diversity of the Application. On the other hand, *particular* Rules for every single Case, are as impossible to be laid down; because their *Number* would wholly confound the Memory, and so become incapable of being applied at all. The middle and most useful Way, is to mention the principal Heads only; which, being Few, are easy to be remembred; and yet to which all the rest, that are numberless, may with ease be occasionally reduced in Practice. In order therefore to explain distinctly and intelligibly, what true *Humility* is; it may be proper to consider it, with regard to the *Persons* towards whom it is to be exercised, and with regard to the *Things* wherein those Persons differ severally from each other. The *Persons*, in  
 our

our behaviour towards whom the Virtue S E R M.  
of *Humility* is to be exercised, are either X.  
*Superiours, Equals, or Inferiours*: and the   
*Things* wherein these several Persons dif-  
fer principally from each other, are either  
their *Civil Stations* in the World, their  
different *Natural Abilities*, or their *Reli-*  
*gious Improvements*.

1<sup>st</sup>, W I T H regard to *Superiours* in ge-  
neral, true *Humility* consists, in paying  
them *cheerfully and readily* all due Ho-  
nour and Respect, in those *particular Re-*  
*gards wherein* they are our *Superiours*, not-  
withstanding any *other* accidental Disad-  
vantages on *their* side, or Advantages on  
*ours*. More particularly; with regard to  
*Superiours* in *Civil Stations* in the World,  
true *Humility* consists, in obeying them  
willingly in all things just and lawful;  
in submitting to the Authority, even of  
the froward and unworthy; in not de-  
spising their Persons, exposing their Weak-  
nesses, or insulting over their Infirmities;  
but being truly sensible, that those of Us  
who think best of our own Abilities,  
might, in higher Stations, and under  
greater Trusts, find Difficulties we are

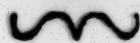
S E R M. not at present aware of ; and very possibly  
 X. not be able to see, or at least not find  
 means to avoid, the Frailties we are generally so apt to censure in the Behaviour of our Superiours. With regard to Superiours in Natural *Abilities*, true Humility consists, not in submitting our Understandings to them blindly and implicitly, but in being willing and desirous to be instructed and informed by them ; in not envying them the Advantages God has given them above ourselves ; nor repining, but on the contrary *rejoicing*, at their being preferred or honoured, according to the Proportion of their true Merit or Capacity. With regard to Superiours in Religious *Improvements*, Humility consists likewise, in *rejoicing* to see the Practice of Virtue, and the Advancement of the Kingdom of God upon Earth ; not grieving, but taking Pleasure, to find such Persons esteemed highly in the World, and proposing them to ourselves as Examples and Patterns for our Imitation. This is the Virtue of Humility, in our Behaviour towards *Superiours* of all kinds.



2dly, TOWARDS our *Equals*, true Hu- SERM.  
mility consists, in civil and affable, in cour- X.  
teous and modest behaviour; not in formal  
Pretences of thinking very meanly and  
contemptibly of ourselves; (for such Pro-  
fessions are often very consistent with  
great Pride,) but in patiently permitting  
our Equals (when it shall so happen) to  
be preferred before us, not thinking our-  
selves injured when Others but of equal  
Merit chance to be more esteemed, but  
on the contrary rather suspecting that we  
judge too favourably of ourselves, and  
therefore modestly desiring that those who  
are reputed upon the level with us, may  
have shown unto them rather a greater  
Respect. This is what the Apostle means;  
*Rom. xii. 10*; when he bids us *be kindly  
affectioned one to another, with brotherly  
love, in honour preferring one another.*  
'Tis what the Wise-man had long before  
exhorted to; *Prov. xxv. 6*; *Put not forth  
thyself in the presence of the King, and  
stand not in the place of great men; For  
better is it, that it be said unto thee,  
Come up hither; than that thou shouldst  
be put lower in the presence of the Prince*  
P 3 whom

S E R M.

X.



*whom thine eyes have seen. 'Tis what our Saviour still more largely and distinctly recommends, in that Parable whereof the Text is the conclusion; St Luk. xiv. 7; He put forth a Parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou, be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him, come and say to thee, Give This man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room: But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee: The Application of all which, he subjoins in the words of the Text; ver. 11; For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. Further; True Humility with regard to our Equals, consists, in willingly submitting, for Peace sake, to many things, if not very unreasonable, yet otherwise such*

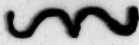
such as in our own judgement we should S E R M.  
not chuse or think best of. *Eph. iv. 1;* X.

*I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; ----- For unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the Gift of Christ; i. e. men have different judgements, different inclinations, different Gifts and Talents from God, divided to every one severally as he pleases; and therefore, to prevent Confusion, where men otherwise are Equals, the Duty of Humility requires, that they should all be ready to submit to each other, with all Meekness, Patience and Good-will. Col. iii. 12; Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; ----- And above all these things, put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfection; Charity, i. e. mutual Love and an affectionate desire of Peace and Agreement;*



S E R M. For so it is explained in the words next  
 X. immediately following ; *And let the Peace  
 of God rule in your Hearts, to which also  
 ye are called in one Body.* The like Exhortation we find ; 1 *Pet.* v. 5 ; where the Apostle not only directs, *Ye Younger, submit yourselves unto the Elder ;* but he adds moreover, *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with Humility.* And *Eph.* v. 21 ; *Submitting yourselves one to another in the Fear of God.* This is the Character of true *Humility*, in our Behaviour towards our *Equals*.

3dly ; W I T H regard to our *Inferiours*, Humility consists, in assuming to ourselves no more than the Difference of Men's Circumstances, and the Performance of their respective Duties, for preserving the regularity and good Order of the World, necessarily requires. Particularly, towards Inferiours in Civil *Stations* in the World, the Humility of a Governour consists, not in making his Authority despicable and subject to contempt, but in exercising it so, as to show that he is not puffed up with the Love of Power and Dominion, but looks upon it as a Trust committed to him,

him, for the Benefit of those who are S E R M.  
placed under his Inspection. He com- X.  
mands, without insulting; he reprov-   
es, with meekness; he punishes un-  
willingly, and never without giving evi-  
dence of Pity and Compassion. With re-  
gard to Inferiours in natural *Abilities* or  
Accidental *Advantages* in the World,  
such as Learning and Knowledge, Riches,  
Plenty, and the like; Humility consists,  
in not despising and contemning those,  
upon whom God has been pleased to be-  
stow fewer Talents; but on the contra-  
ry in considering, that possibly *they* have  
some *other* Gifts, which may be wanting  
in *us*; and in being willing to *communi-*  
*cate* to *them*, the Advantages *we* enjoy;  
that *They* may be the better, for the  
Things wherewith God has blessed *Us*.  
The true Humility of a *rich man* consists,  
not in levelling himself with the Poor,  
but in being willing to assist them by re-  
lieving their Necessities: not in confound-  
ing the Distinctions of Men's Condition,  
which God and Nature has established;  
but in endeavouring to make the condition  
of the Meanest easy, and supportable to  
themselves.

S E R M. themselves. And in like manner, the true  
 X. Humility of Persons endued with more  
 ~~~~~ *Learning and Knowledge* than others, does  
 not consist in making a Show of being ignorant, (which may be a conceited Vanity or foolish Affectation ;) but it consists in being willing to *communicate* what they know, and in sincerely desiring that all Others might attain the same Knowledge with themselves: After the example of *Moses*, who, instead of becoming haughty and insolent through the multitude of the Revelations wherewith God had been pleased to honour him ; and instead of discouraging others, from seeking after the like Knowledge ; on the contrary declared publickly ; *Numb. xi. 29 ; Would God that All the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.* Lastly, Towards our Inferiours in respect of Religious *Improvements*, true Humility consists, in being rightly sensible of our *own many* Infirmities, even *those* of Us who may be apt to imagine ourselves to have made the *greatest* Improvements ; and in being sincerely solicitous, for the welfare, and the Salvation

tion of All men; Let nothing be done S E R M.
 through Strife or Vain-glory, but in Low- X.
 lines of Mind let each one esteem other
 better than themselves; Look not every man
 on his own things, but every man also on
 the things of Others; Phil. ii. 3. It con-
 sists, in indeavouring to influence Men
 towards Religion, by Meekness rather than
 by Power: Jesus called his Disciples unto
 him, and said; Ye know that the Princes
 of the Gentiles, exercise Dominion over
 them; and they that are great, exercise
 Authority upon them: But it shall not be
 so among you; but whosoever will be great
 among you, let him be your Minister; And
 whosoever will be chief among you, let him
 be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man
 came not to be ministred unto, but to mini-
 ster, and to give his life a ransom for ma-
 ny; St Matt. xx. 25. It consists, in not
 affecting to gain the empty Applause of
 Men, by an outward ostentation of great-
 er Piety than others: All their Works,
 They do, (says our Saviour, speaking of the
 proud Pharisees,) they do for to be seen of
 men; They make broad their Phylacteries,
 and enlarge the borders of their garments;
 And

SERM. *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and*

X. *the chief Seats in the Synagogues; And*
 greetings in the markets, and to be called
 of men, Rabbi, Rabbi; But be not ye called,
 Rabbi; for One is your Master, even
 Christ; and all ye are brethren: And call
 no man your Father upon Earth; For One
 is your Father, which is in Heaven: Nei-
 ther be ye called, Masters; For One is your
 Master, even Christ; But he that is great-
 est among you, shall be your Servant: And
 whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be aba-
 sed; and he that shall humble himself, shall
 be exalted; St Matt. xxiii. 4. It consists,
 in condescending to those beneath us, and
 not disdaining even to yield to them in
 things indifferent; Be of the same mind
 one towards another; Mind not high things,
 but condescend to men of low estate: Be
 not wise in your own Conceits; Rom. xii.
 16. It consists, in bearing their infirmi-
 ties patiently and without frowardness;
 We then that are strong, ought to bear the
 infirmities of the Weak, and not to please
 ourselves: Let every one of us please his
 neighbour, for his Good to Edification: For
 even Christ pleased not himself; Rom. xv. 1.

It

Of Humility.

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It consists, in *forbearing* to judge or *despise* S E R M.
those that differ from us in opinion ; *Let* X.
not him that eateth, despise him that eateth
not ; and let not him which eateth not, judge
him that eateth ; Rom. xiv. 3. It consists,
in taking care not to *offend*, by haughty
and presumptuous behaviour, such per-
sons as by Meekness might be prevailed
upon to believe in Christ, or such as by
kind treatment might be kept from de-
parting into Divisions ; *Take heed, that ye*
despise not one of these little ones ; For
whoso shall offend one of these little ones
that believe in me, it were better for him
that a milstone were hanged about his Neck,
and that he were drowned in the depth of
the Sea ; St. Matt. xviii. 10, 6. It consists,
in taking heed not to *impose* needless *Dif-*
ficulties upon those under our Power ; For
so our Saviour describes the Pride of the
Pharisees ; *They bind heavy burdens and*
grievous to be born, and lay them on men's
shoulders ; but they themselves will not
move them with one of their Fingers ; St
Matt. xxiii. 4 ; and 1 Pet. v. 3 ; *Neither*
as being Lords over God's heritage, but be-
ing Examples to the Flock : Lastly, it con-
sists

S E R M. X. sits in using great *gentleness*, even to those that *have offended*; Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a Fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thyself, lest Thou also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1. And 2 Tim. ii. 25; In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure would give them Repentance to the acknowledgement of the Truth. These are the Characters and the Instances of True Humility, with regard to our Inferiours in Religious Improvements; which was the last of those Cases or Circumstances, wherein for distinctness sake, I proposed to consider This excellent Virtue. And indeed there are No cases, wherein the Practice of Humility is more difficult or more intricate, than when men are tempted to Spiritual *Pride*, or to *despise* those who are supposed to be their Inferiours in *religious* improvements. Which Vice insinuating itself into men upon *different* occasions, and branching forth itself into *many* Instances; a brief mentioning some of the principal of them, may assist us still further in understanding the nature of the contrary

ry Virtue. And 1st, there is a *spiritual* S E R M.
Pride in *presuming* to sin, upon the Sense X.
of the Virtues we are in other respects in-
duced with. This was the Case of *Uzziab*
King of *Judah*; of whom the Scripture
relates; 2 Chr. xxvi. 4, 16; that *he did*
that which was right in the Sight of the
Lord, according to all that his Father had
done, And he sought God in the days of Ze-
chariah, who had understanding in the Vi-
sions of God;-----and God made him to pros-
per:-----But when he was strong, his heart
was lifted up to his destruction; for he
transgressed against the Lord his God.
The same was in some degree the case of
Hezekiah, who having served the Lord
diligently, beyond all that his Fathers had
done; and having been accordingly blef-
sed with great Prosperity; yet at length he
rendred not again according to the Benefits
done unto him; For his Heart was lifted
up; Therefore there was wrath upon him,
and upon Judah and Jerusalem; 2 Chr.
xxxii. 25. And This is a Fault so inci-
dent even to otherwise good men, that St
Paul declares even concerning *himself*;
2 Cor. xii. 7; *Lest I should be exalted a-*
bove

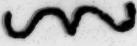
S E R M. *bove measure through the Abundance of the*
 X. *Revelations, there was given to me a Thorn*
 in the Flesh, an Affliction, the messenger
 of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be ex-
 alted above measure. The Duty of Humi-
 lity in This case, consists, in being always
 sensible of our Fallibility and our Dan-
 ger; in working out our own Salvation
 with Fear and Trembling; even when
 we think we stand surest, yet taking heed
 lest we fall; being (as the Prophet expres-
 ses it; *Is. lxvi. 2.*) of a poor and contrite
 Spirit, and trembling at God's Word.
 2dly, There is a spiritual Pride of Vain-
 glory, in affecting a publick Appearance of
 such Actions, as in themselves are good
 and commendable. This was the great
 Fault of the Pharisees; who loved to go
 in long-clothing, and loved salutations in
 the market-places, and the chief Seats in
 the Synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at
 feasts; who when they gave their Alms,
 sounded a trumpet before them in the syna-
 gogues and in the streets, that they might
 have glory of men; and when they prayed,
 did it standing in the synagogues, and in
 the corners of the streets, that they might be
 seen

Mar. xii.
38.

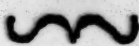
Matt. vi. 2.

vi. 5.

vi. 16.

seen of Men; and, when they fasted, put S E R M.
on a sad countenance, and disfigured their X.
Faces, that they might appear unto men to 
fast.

In opposition to This, true Humility consists, in being contented to let the World be ignorant of the particular good Works we do; in so disposing our Alms, as *not to let our left hand know what our right hand does*; and in avoiding all Affectation, and publick Boasting, of our private Virtues. All which nevertheless, is so far from being inconsistent with that other Precept of our Saviour, of *letting our Light so shine before men, that they may see our good Works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven*; that, on the contrary, there is no greater and more effectual recommendation of Virtue, to the imitation of *reasonable and well-disposed* Persons; than when they find it sincerely unaffected, and which *vaunteth not it self*.
 3dly; There is a *spiritual Pride*, of men *confidently justifying themselves*, and being wholly insensible of their *own* Failings, while they are very censorious in *judging and despising* others. Of This, our Saviour gives us an excellent instance, St

S E R M. Luke xviii. 9. *And he spake this Parable*
 X. *unto certain which trusted in themselves*
 *that they were righteous, and despised*
others; Two men went up into the Temple
to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other
a Publican: The Pharisee stood and prayed
thus with himself, God, I thank thee that
I am not as other men are, extortioners,
unjust, adulterers, or even as this publi-
can: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes
of all that I possess: And the Publican
standing afar off, would not lift up so much
as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his
Breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a
Sinner: I tell you, says our Saviour, this
man went down to his house justified rather
than the other; For every one that exalteth
himself shall be abased; and he that hum-
bleth himself, shall be exalted. The same
Sort of Pride, is described by the Wise-
man; Prov. xxx. 12: There is a generation
that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is
not washed from their filthiness; There is a
generation, O how lofty are their eyes, and
their eye-lids are lifted up. Again, by our
Saviour; St. Luke xvi. 15; Ye are they
which justify yourselves before men, but
 God

Of Humility.

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God knoweth your Hearts ; for that which S E R M.
is highly esteemed among men, is abomina- X.
tion in the sight of God. And by St Paul ;

2 Cor. x. 12 ; *We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves ; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves are not wise : But we will not boast of things without our measure ;---- For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.* And Gal. vi. 3 ; *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* And again, by our Saviour himself ; Rev. iii. 17 ; *Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked : speaking of a corrupt and prosperous state of the Church. The Humility opposite to This sort of Pride, is that of St Paul ; 1 Cor. iv. 4 ; I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified ; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord.* And Phil. iii. 12 ; *Not as though I had already attained, either were already per-*

VOL. III.

Q 2

fect ;

S E R M. *fect; --- but this One thing I do; forgetting*
 X. *those things which are behind, and reaching*
forth unto those things which are before, I
press towards the mark, for the prize of the
high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And
that of Job; ch. ix. 20; and ch. xlii. 6;
If I justify myself, my own mouth shall
condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it
shall also prove me perverse; --- Wherefore
I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.
 The meaning of all which, is; not that
 good men should speak or *think* of them-
 selves, in the same manner and sense as
 wicked men ought to do; but that when
 they consider the infinite purity of
 God and the perfection of his law, they
 should then humble themselves in a deep
 sense of their own many Follies and im-
 perfections. 4^{thly}; There is still a *fur-*
ther degree of *spiritual Pride*, in pretend-
 ing to *Merit* at the hands of God; as
 those of the Church of *Rome* have pre-
 sumptuously assumed to themselves to do.
 And in opposition to *This* sort of *Pride*,
Humility consists in that *Disposition* of
Mind, which is recorded of the good
Centurion; St. Luke vii. 6; and Mat. viii. 8.
 Lord,

Of Humility.

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S E R M.

X.

Lord, I am not worthy, (I have no claim, no pretence to expect,) that thou shouldst come under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I my self worthy to come unto thee; but speak the word, and my Servant shall be healed. And of St. Paul; Eph. iii. 8; Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given; The expression is hyperbolical; But the meaning is, that he had not any the least claim of Right or Desert to that singular Favour, of being made the Apostle to the Gentiles. And in like manner, of Abraham; Gen. xviii. 27. I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and Ashes. And of Jacob; Gen. xxxii. 10; I am not worthy of the least of all thy Mercies. And accordingly our Saviour directs his Disciples; St Luke xvii. 10; When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable Servants; we have done that which was our Duty to do. Nevertheless, upon This Head of Merit, it is also to be observed, that there is a Fault even in the contrary Extreme; a pretended Humility, in imagining, that as we cannot Merit, so neither are we

Q 3

able

S E R M. able to *Do* any thing, but must leave the
 X. Grace of God to do All for us. Which
 opinion, does as effectually destroy Religion in *one* extreme, as the doctrine of *Merit* does in the *other*. For, as, according to the Doctrine of *Merit*, the *Reward* is not of *Grace*, but by *Claim of Right*; so, on the other side, if we are able to *do nothing at all*, then the *Punishment* cannot be by *Justice*, but by mere *arbitrary Power*, which is inconsistent with the Attributes of God. 5thly, There is yet a *higher* degree of this *Spiritual Pride*, in pretending to Works of *Supererogation*. This also is a fond Pretence of the Church of *Rome*. And This seems to have been the Fault of the Young man in the Gospel; who, when our Saviour had said unto him, *if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*; would needs reply further; St. Matt. xix. 20; *What lack I yet?* This also is what St Paul so justly reproveth; Col. ii. 18; *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind; -----*
 which

Of Humility.

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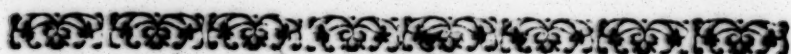
which things have indeed a Show of Wis- SERM.
dom, in will-worship and humility: But X.
True humility, in opposition to this false
and proud appearance of it, consists, in
making, not our own Will, but the Will
of God, the Rule of our Duty; casting
down imaginations, and every high thing,
that exalteth itself against the knowledge
of God; and bringing into captivity every
Thought to the Obedience of Christ, not, of
Men but, of Christ. Lastly, There is a
Spiritual Pride, in seeking after and be-
ing fond of mysterious and secret things,
to the neglect of our plain and manifest
Duty; In allusion to which, the corrupt
Church in the Revelations, is stiled, My-
stery, Babylon the Great. And in op-
position to This, true Humility is that
which the Wiseman describes; Prov. iii. 7;
*Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear the
Lord, and depart from evil: And Moses,
Deut. xxix. 29; Secret things belong unto
the Lord our God; but those things which
are revealed, belong unto us, and to our chil-
dren for ever, that we may do all the Words
of this Law: And the Psalmist; Ps. cxxxi.
1; Lord, mine heart is not haughty, nor mine*

S E R M. *eyes lofty ; neither do I exercise myself in*
 X. *great matters, or in things too high for me :*
 ~~~~~ *And the Wise Son of Sirach ; Ecclus. iii.*  
*21 ; Seek not out the things that are too hard*  
*for thee, neither search the things that are*  
*above thy strength : But what is command-*  
*ed thee, think thereupon with reverence ;*  
*for it is not needful for thee to see with thine*  
*eyes the things that are in secret : Be not*  
*curious in unnecessary matters, for more*  
*things are shewed unto thee, than men under-*  
*stand : For many are deceived by their own*  
*vain opinion, and an evil suspicion has over-*  
*thrown their judgement. The only caution*  
*here necessary to be given, is that this en-*  
*tire humble Submission of our own judge-*  
*ment, is due to God only, in the Words of*  
*his own immediate and express Revela-*  
*tion : The paying the like deference to*  
*any humane doctrine or humane explication*  
*of doctrine whatsoever, without thorough-*  
*ly examining it and understanding it per-*  
*fectly ; is not Humility, but Ignorance and*  
*Sloth. And This may suffice upon the 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*particular, what True Humility is, and*  
*wherein it consists.*



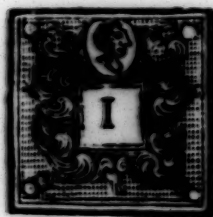
# S E R M O N X I.

Of H U M I L I T Y.



LUK. XIV. 11.

*For whosoever exalteth himself, shall  
be abased; and he that humbleth  
himself, shall be exalted.*



N a former Discourse upon S E R M.  
XI.  
these Words, I have endeavoured to show distinctly  
*What* the Virtue of true Humility *is*, and wherein it consists. It remains that I proceed at this Time, to propose some *Arguments* to perswade men to the *Practice* of it.  
And



SERM. And 1<sup>st</sup>, The Scripture frequently lays  
 XI. before us, the *natural* ill consequences of  
 ~~~~~ Pride; and the Advantages arising from  
 true Humility, even in the *natural* Course
 and Order of Things.

PRIDE makes men foolish, and void
 of caution; and This puts them upon
 doing things that bring them to Disho-
 nour: *When Pride cometh, then cometh
 Shame; but with the lowly is Wisdom;*
 Prov. xi. 2.

IT makes men negligent, and impro-
 vident of the future; and this often
 throws them into sudden calamities; *The
 Turning away of the Simple,* (in the origi-
 nal it is, *the Ease, the Negligence of the
 Simple;*) *shall slay them; and the Prospe-
 rity of Fools shall destroy them;* Prov. i. 32.

IT makes men rash and peevish, ob-
 stinate and insolent; and This seldom
 fails to bring down ruin upon them;
*Pride goeth before destruction, and an
 haughty Spirit before a Fall; Better it is
 to be of an humble Spirit with the lowly,
 than to divide the Spoil with the Proud;*
 Prov. xvi. 18.

IT involves men perpetually in Strifes S E R M.
and Contentions; and These always mul- XI.
tiply Sin, and are inconsistent with true
Happiness; *He loveth transgression, that
loveth strife; and he that exalteth his Gate,
seeketh Destruction; Prov. xvii. 19.*

IT disoblige men's best Friends, and
gives their Enemies perpetual Advantages
against them; and This often draws great
inconveniencies upon them: *Before de-
struction the Heart of Man is haughty,
and before Honour is Humility; Prov. xviii.*

12.

IT makes men vain and lovers of Flat-
tery, rejecting those about them who
would do them most Kindness, and liking
those best who do them the greatest in-
jury; And This causes them to be in-
sensible of their own Disease, till they
suddenly fall under Contempt: *A man's
Pride shall bring him low, but Honour
shall uphold the humble in Spirit; Prov.*
xxix. 23.

IT makes men impatient of good
Advice and Instruction, and That ren-
ders them incorrigible in their Vices;
Seest thou a man wise in his own Conceit?
there

S E R M. *there is more Hope of a Fool, than of him :*

XI. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason ; Prov. xxvi. 12, 16 ; and xxviii. 26 ; He that trusteth in his own Heart, is a Fool ; but whoſo walketh wiſely, he ſhall be delivered.*

Laſtly ; I T fills men full of vain-glorious Deſigns, employing all their Thoughts in ſelf-confident Imaginations ; and This makes them incapable of Religious improvements, and to have no reliſh of true Wiſdom : The full Soul loatheth the honey-comb ; Prov. xxvii. 7 ; and xxv. 27 ; It is not good to eat much honey ; ſo for men to ſearch their own glory, is not glory.

THESE are the elegant Observations of wiſe Solomon, upon the *natural* inconveniencies and diſadvantages of Pride. In the *other* parts of Scripture we find like-
wiſe, ſeveral Remarks of the ſame kind. That *Pride* hinders men from examining impartially, into the Truth of Religion ; *How can ye believe, ſays our Saviour, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour which cometh from God only ?*

only? Joh. v. 44. And, have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? ch. vii. 48. That it makes men disdain to leave their pleasing Vanities, and think much to condescend to the mean Restraints and Confinements of Religion; Judges ix. 9; *The Olive-tree said,---Should I leave my Fatness?-----And the Fig-tree said,---Should I forsake my Sweetness, and my good Fruit?-----And the Vine said,---Should I leave my Wine which cheereth God and Men, and go to be promoted over the trees?* ver. 13. That it causes men to take Offence at the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel, and thereby hinders it from making due impressions upon them; *The Wisdom of God,-----which none of the Princes of This World knew;* 1 Cor. ii. 8; *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World?-----For ye see your calling, Brethren, how that not many Wise men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;* ch. i. 20, 26; *Therefore let no man glory in men: If any man among you seemeth to be wise in This World, let him become a Fool, that he may be*

SERM.
XI.
~

S E R M. *be wise* ; i. e. let him lay aside the Wisdom
 XL of *Self-conceit*, in order to become *capable* of Instruction in the *true Wisdom* ;
 ch. iii. 21, 18. That it hinders men from performing the Duty of Christian Charity, one towards another ; *Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not* ; 3 Joh. 9. Lastly, that in the execution of the *Offices* of Christian Authority, it turns men from a due regard of the *Intent* of their Office, to *temporal* and worldly considerations, and this leads them into a Snare, and brings them to Destruction : *A Bishop* (says the Apostle) *must not be a novice, lest being lifted up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil* ; 1 Tim. iii. 6. These are the *natural* ill consequences of Pride, which the Scripture lays before us ; and which consequently discover to us the Advantages arising from true Humility, even in the *natural* course and order of things.

2dly ; T H E next Argument the Scripture makes use of, to perswade men to the Practice of Humility, is This ; that Pride, as it is usually of *natural* ill consequence,

quence; so it is moreover particularly S E R M.
bateful to God; who represents himself XI.
as taking *delight*, to bring down the lofty,
and to exalt the humble. It is the Ob-
servation of *Eliphaz* in the book of
Job; ch. xxii. 29; *When men are cast*
down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting
up; and he shall save the Humble person:
And ch. xxxiii. 14, 17; *God speaketh once,*
yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not;---that
he may withdraw man from his purpose,
and hide Pride from man. God himself,
by the Prophet *Isaiah*, declares, ch. ii. 11;
The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed
down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted
in that Day; For the day of the Lord of
hosts shall be upon every one that is proud
and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted
up; and he shall be brought low. The
Wise man in like manner; *Prov. iii. 34;*
Surely (says he) he scorneth the scorers,
but giveth grace unto the lowly. Which
passage is, almost in the very same words,
quoted by *St Peter*; *1 Pet. v. 5; Be clothed*
with humility; For God resisteth the Proud,
and giveth Grace unto the humble. The
Blessed

S E R M. Blessed Virgin, after the Angel's annun-
 XI. ciating to her the Conception of our Lord,
 inserts into her hymn the same general Ob-
 servation : *He hath showed strength with
 his Arm, he hath scattered the proud in the
 imagination of their Hearts ; He hath put
 down the mighty from their Seats, and has
 exalted the humble and meek ; St Luke i. 51.*
 Our Saviour himself, taking a little Child,
 and setting it before his Disciples, when
 they were contending for preeminence ;
*Verily (says he) I say unto you ;---who-
 soever shall humble himself as this little
 Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom
 of Heaven ;--- But whosoever shall offend
 one of these little ones that believe in me,
 i. e. whosoever shall by proud and con-
 temptuous treatment discourage the mean-
 est Christian, or drive him into any Sin ;
 it were better for him that a milstone were
 hanged about his neck, and that he were
 drowned in the Depth of the Sea ; St. Mat.
 xviii. 4, 6.* And again, in the words of
 the Text, upon another not unlike occa-
 sion ; *Whosoever (saith he) exalteth him-
 self shall be abased ; and he that humbleth
 himself, shall be exalted.* The Reason why
 Pride

Of Humility.

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Pride is always represented in Scripture, S E R M.
as being thus *particularly* hateful to God ; XI.
is because it usually signifies, and always
includes, something of that *Presumptu-
ousness*, that *presuming* to transgress inso-
lently and with a high Hand, which is
the greatest Aggravation of Sin, and the
most directly opposite to that meek and
humble Spirit, which *trembleth at God's
Word*, which studies his Will, and is al-
ways fearful of disobeying it. *Wo unto
them*, saith the Prophet, *that call evil
good, and good evil ; that put darkness for
light, and light for darkness ;* Is. v. 20 ;
i. e. who are so insolent as presumptuously
to deny, either in their Words or Actions,
the most evident moral Differences of
Right and Wrong : For so it is explained
in the Words immediately following ; *Wo* Is. v. 21.
unto them, (not, who mistake, or are guil-
ty of any Errour or false opinion in this
matter, but) *unto them that are wise in
their own eyes, and prudent in their own
sight ; who say, We will walk after our* Jer. xviii.
12.
*own devices, and we will every one do the
imagination of his evil Heart : Who say
unto God, Depart from us, for we desire*
V O L. III. R not

S E R M. *not the knowledge of thy ways : What is*
 XI. *the Almighty, that we should serve him ?*
 ~~~~~ *and what profit should we have if we*  
*pray unto him ? Job xxi. 14. Concerning*  
*such persons as These it is, that the Scrip-*  
*ture threatens ; Every one that is proud*  
*in Heart, is an abomination to the Lord ;*  
*though hand join in hand, he shall not be*  
*unpunished ; Prov. xvi. 5. It is generally*  
*supposed by Divines, that the original*  
*Sin even of the Devil himself, was Pride ;*  
*because St Paul speaking of a man's be-*  
*ing lift up with Pride, calls it his falling*  
*into the condemnation of the Devil. And*  
*this, is not at all improbable ; provided, by*  
*Pride, be understood, not (with the vul-*  
*gar) his attempting to resist God Almigh-*  
*ty by Force, which is absurd and impossi-*  
*ble and childish to imagine ; but his*  
*presuming, upon the Greatness and Dig-*  
*nity of his Nature, insolently to trans-*  
*gress some of the Divine Commands.*  
*And something like this, is the Case of*  
*Powerful Tyrannical Princes, who proud-*  
*ly despise the Thoughts and Expectation*  
*of God's righteous judgement. For which*  
*reason, the Prophet Isaiah so describes*  
 the



the Destruction of the King of *Babylon*, S E R M. XI.  
 that the Words are, not without probability, thought to be an Allusion to the Fall of *Satan*; ch. xiv. 12; *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the Nations! For thou hast said in thine Heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the Stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the Congregation, in the sides of the North; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the Pit. And They that see thee shall----say, Is this the man that made the Earth to tremble?----that made the World as a wilderness, and destroyed the Cities thereof?* This is the manner wherein the Scripture represents God *delighting* to destroy Tyrants, those proud and mighty Transgressors.

A N O T H E R instance of which, is the description of the Haughtiness and the Fall of *Nebuchadnezzar*; Dan. iv. 30; *The King spake and said, Is not This great Babylon that I have built for the House*

SERM. of the Kingdom, by the might of my Power,  
 XI. and for the honour of my Majesty? But  
 when his Heart was lifted up, and his  
 Mind hardened in Pride, he was deposed  
 from his kingly throne, and they took his  
 glory from him: And he was driven from  
 the Sons of men, and his Heart was made  
 like the Beasts, and his dwelling was with  
 the wild Asses; ch. v. 20; that is, his Un-  
 derstanding was taken from him, and he  
 imagined himself to be turned into a  
 Beast.

AND the Instance of Pharaoh; Exod.  
 v. 2; *Who is the Lord, that I should obey  
 his Voice?—I know not the Lord, neither  
 will I let Israel go: Therefore the Lord  
 sent all his plagues upon his Heart, and  
 upon his Servants, and upon his People;*  
 ch. ix. 14.

AND that of Herod; Acts xii. 21; Up-  
 on a set day, Herod arrayed in royal ap-  
 parel, sat upon his throne, and made an  
 oration; And the people gave a shout, say-  
 ing, It is the voice of a god, and not of  
 a man; And immediately the Angel of the  
 Lord smote him, because he gave not God  
 the glory; and he was eaten of worms,  
 and

and gave up the Ghost. The Angel of the S E R M.  
 Lord, that is, a sudden disease, by the XI.  
 direction of Providence, came upon him: ~~~~~  
 The Figure is the same as that which  
 St Paul uses, when he calls a temporal  
 Affliction the *Messenger* or *Angel* of Satan  
 to buffet him; 2 Cor. xii. 7; So 1 Th.  
 ii. 18.

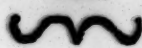
A N O T H E R Example, is that of *Ha-*  
*man*, in the Book of *Esther*; who when  
 he would have sacrificed a whole Nation  
 to his Pride and Haughtiness, God justly  
 suffered him to fall by the same ignomi-  
 nious Death which he had contrived for  
 another.

A N D that of *spiritual Babylon* or *Chri-*  
*stian Tyranny* and the Spirit of *Persecution*  
 in the *Revelation*; ch. xviii. 7; *How much*  
*she has glorified herself, and lived delici-*  
*ously, so much torment and sorrow give*  
*her; For she saith in her heart, I sit a*  
*Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no*  
*sorrow; Therefore shall her plagues come*  
*in one day; death and mourning and fa-*  
*mine; and she shall be utterly burnt with*  
*Fire; for strong is the Lord God who*  
*judgeth her.*



S E R M.

XI.



THE manner and Reason of God's proceedings in all which and the like Instances, cannot be more elegantly expressed, than in the words of the wise Son of Sirach; *Ecclus. x. 7; Pride is hateful before God and Man, and by both doth one commit Iniquity:-----Why is Earth and Ashes proud?-----The beginning of Pride is, when one departeth from God, and his Heart is turned away from his Maker: For Pride is the beginning of Sin; and he that hath it, shall pour out abomination; and therefore the Lord brought upon them strange calamities, and overthrew them utterly: The Lord hath cast down the Thrones of proud Princes, and set up the meek in their stead: The Lord hath plucked up the roots of the proud Nations, and planted the lowly in their place: The Lord overthrew the Countries of the Heathen, and destroyed them to the Foundations of the Earth.-----Pride was not made for men, nor furious Anger for them that are born of a woman. This therefore is the second Argument to deter men from Pride; the consideration of its being particularly hateful to God.*

3dly,

3dly, THE *third* and last motive the S E R M. XI. Scripture lays before us, to recommend the Practice of Humility, is the *Example* of God himself, and of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Properly and strictly speaking, *Humility* is not a Perfection that can be ascribed to God: Because where there is no room for *Pride*, there can never be properly any Exercise of *Humility*; and He whose Nature is of infinite and unlimited Excellency, can neither possibly assume to *himself*, nor have ascribed to him by *Others*, any thing beyond what is absolutely and necessarily due to him. Neither can he possibly *debase* himself, in the literal Sense; or in any wise *diminish* from his own superlative and unchangeable Excellency. Nevertheless, in a figurative manner of speaking, the Scripture *does* sometimes ascribe Humility to God, and recommends his Condescension as a Pattern for us to imitate. *The Lord, who dwelleth on high,-----humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven, and in the Earth; Ps. cxiii. 6: And Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Though the Lord be high, yet hath he re-*

S E R M. *spect unto the lowly.* And the same manner of speaking is used by God himself ;  
 XI. *Is. lvii. 15 ; Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity ;-----I dwell in the High and Holy Place ; with Him also, that is of a contrite and humble Spirit ; And ch. lxvi. 1 ; Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool ;---yet to This man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* But the Example more accommodate to our Infirmities, and more generally alleged in Scripture, is that of *our Saviour* : Who, though he was Lord of all, yet was content *not to have where to lay his Head* ; St *Matt. viii. 20.* Before whom it was proclaimed ; *Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an Ass* ; St *Matt. xxi. 5.* Who, though he was greater than All, yet declared concerning himself ; *If I honour myself, my honour is nothing ; It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God* ; St *Joh. viii. 54.* Who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his Po-

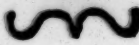
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erty might be rich ; 2 Cor. viii. 9. Who, S E R M.  
XI.  
 glorified not Himself, to be made an High Priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son ; Heb. v. 5. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatned not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously ; 1 Pet. ii. 23. Which Example of universal Humility in all Circumstances, he himself proposes to us for our Imitation : Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart ; St Matt. xi. 29. If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your Feet, then I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you ; St Job. xiii. 15. Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant ; Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many ; St Matt. xx. 28. And the same is urged by the Apostle ; Rom. xv. 2 ; Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification ; For even Christ pleased not himself. And Phil. ii. 5 ; Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ; Who, though he was in the Form of God, yet was not greedy to appear as God ;

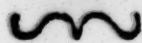
SERM. God; (so the words signify in the original;) but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men; And---humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross: Wherefore God also has highly exalted him.

THESE are the Principal Arguments the Scripture makes use of, to perswade men to the Practice of Humility in general. There are moreover in particular, as many peculiar distinct Motives to practise this Duty, as there are different Circumstances and Varieties of Cases wherein it is to be exercised. Without practising it towards *Superiours*, there can be no Government; without exercising it towards *Equals*, there can be no Friendship and mutual Charity. Then, with regard to *Inferiours*; besides the general Example of Christ's singular and unspeakable Condescension towards us All, there are proper Arguments to deter us from Pride upon account of every particular Advantage we may seem to have over Others, whether in respect of our  
Civil

Civil Stations in the World, or of our S E R M.  
 Natural Abilities, or of our Religious XI.  
 Improvements. If the Advantages of our   
 Civil Stations in the World, tempt us  
 to proud and haughty Behaviour; we  
 may do well to consider that Argument  
 of Job; ch. xxxi 13; *If I did despise the  
 cause of my Man-servant, or of my Maid-  
 servant when they contended with me;  
 What then shall I do, when God riseth up?  
 and when he visiteth, what shall I answer  
 him? Did not he that made Me in the  
 Womb, make Him? and did not One, fa-  
 shion us in the Womb? And ch. xxxiv.  
 19; He accepteth not the Persons of  
 Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more  
 than the Poor; for they are All the Work  
 of his Hands. Which same Argument  
 is urged also by the Wise-man; Prov.  
 xiv. 31; He that oppresseth the Poor, re-  
 proacheth his Maker: And ch. xxii. 2;  
 The Rich and Poor meet together; the  
 Lord is the Maker of them All. It will  
 become us also, to think upon the Vanity  
 and Uncertainty of these things, which  
 are so apt to puff us up: For all Flesh  
 is as Grass; and all the glory of Man,*



SERM. *as the Flower of Grass; The grass wither-*  
 XI. *eth, and the Flower thereof falleth away;*

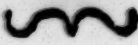


1 Pet. i. 24. And Jam. i. 10; *Let the Rich rejoyce, in that he is made low; because as a Flower of the Grass he shall pass away.* It may be proper likewise to consider, that, if we are placed in High Stations, we have a *larger Account* to give, to him that ruleth over All; and possibly, while we are honoured upon this single Account, others beneath us may be valuable for *better and more really excellent Qualifications*; And it will not be long before Death and Judgement level all worldly Distinctions; And the greatest men, if they have been wicked, shall then be forced to cry out, *What hath Pride profited us? or what hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things are past away as a shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by. Again:* If we are apt to be puffed up with the Advantage of Natural *Abilities*, such as Learning, Knowledge, Wisdom, or the like; it may humble us to consider, how *small* a Degree of these things, we can attain to even at the best: seeing that *Knowledge*, as Job most elegantly expresses it,

is hid from all men, neither is it found in SERM.  
the land of the living. And if we could XI.  
attain to much more of it, than we do ; ch. xxviii.  
yet still there is something far more EX- 21, 13.

cellent than That : *For Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifyeth : And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know ;* 1 Cor. viii. 1. Wherefore, *Thus saith the Lord : Let not the Wise man glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his Might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches : But let him that glorieth, glory in This, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgement and righteousness in the Earth ; For in these things I delight, saith the Lord ;* Jer. ix. 23. Lastly, If our Advantages even in Religious Improvement itself, tempt us to spiritual Pride and Vain-glory, to judge or to despise our weaker Brethren ; the Scripture admonishes us to consider, that all the members of Christ, are useful in their several Stations ; *I say to every man, says the Apostle, that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly,*

SERM. *soberly, according as God has dealt to every*  
 XI. *man the measure of Faith, i. e. according*  
 ~~~~~ *to the Station wherein God has placed him*  
in the Church ; For, as (in our natural ca-
capacity) we have many Members in one Bo-
dy, and all members have not the same Of-
fice ; so (in our spiritual capacity) we being
many are one body in Christ, and every one
members one of another ; Rom. xii. 3 ; that
therefore the Eye cannot say to the hand, I
have no need of thee ; nor again the Head
to the Feet, I have no need of you ; 1 Cor.
xii. 21 ; that our Saviour himself refused
not to be baptized by John Baptist, though
a person infinitely meaner than himself ;
but on the contrary declared, that thus it
becomes us to fulfill all Righteousness : that,
how great soever our Abilities or Advan-
tages be, yet the means by which we ar-
 2 Cor. iii. *rive even at These, are, not that we are*
 5. *sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as*
of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God ;
 1 Cor. iv. *that therefore we must learn not to think*
 6. *of men, above that which is written, that*
no one of us be puffed up for one against a-
nother ; For who maketh thee to differ from
another ? and what hast thou, that thou
didst

didst not receive? The meaning of which SERM.
places, is not, that God acts upon Men as XI.
Machines, so as that They do nothing at 
all themselves, but that the Gifts whereby
they are *enabled* to become eminent, (and
that not so much in *moral* Virtues, as in
miraculous spiritual Powers in the Church,
mentioned at large by *St Paul*; 1 *Cor.*
xii; These) are all, not their own, but
received from God's free Goodness and
Bounty. Further, we are admonished to
consider, in abatement of spiritual Pride
and Contempt of our weaker Brethren,
and of those who differ from us in mat-
ters of opinion; and with whom we are
apt to be angry for not complying with
our Notions; that there is a day a coming,
which, distinguishing men by their Works
of Piety, and true Holiness only, shall le-
vel them in all other respects, and set
them upon Even ground before an impar-
tial Bar; where mens foolish pride and
arrogance, shall be entirely confounded;
and those who looked with scorn upon
others as infinitely below them, shall find
themselves placed upon an equal foot with
them whom perhaps they most despised:

Who

S E R M. *Who art thou, therefore, that judgest another man's servant? To his own Master, he standeth, or falleth; Rom. xiv. 4; and ver. 10; Why dost thou judge thy Brother? and why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. That, how great soever our improvements be, even in real Virtue and Righteousness; yet we have continual reason to take heed lest we fall; and Pride and Confidence, is the Security only of a blind man, who sees no danger: That even while we stand the most upright, we have nothing to glory of before*

Job xxv. *God; For how can man be justified with*

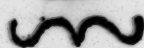
iv. 18. *God? Behold, he put no trust in his Servants, and his Angels he charged with Folly; How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust! That the greatest and most eminently pious men, have been exemplarily humble in This respect; holy Job refusing to justify himself before God;*

ix. 20. *and Abraham styling himself Dust and*

xli. 6. *Ashes; and Jacob acknowledging himself less than the least of God's mercies; and St Paul calling himself less than the least*

of

of all Saints : not that he *then* was so, S E R M.
but that he *had been* a Persecutor of the Church of God. That Humility is the
XI.



only means to entitle us to the Divine Assistance and continual Direction, and the best Help to a right Understanding in matters of Religion ; (meaning always by Humility, not a blind and careless Submission to the Notions of *Men*, but an entire giving up ourselves to the Will of God ;)
Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding ; In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths ; Be not wise in thine own eyes ; Fear the Lord and depart from evil ; This is the Advice of Solomon ; Prov. iii. 5. And the Psalmist declares : Ps. xxv. 9 ; Them that are meek will God guide in judgment ; and such as are gentle, them will he learn his way ; And St. Paul directs ; 2 Cor. x. 5. to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and to bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ ; Not our Understandings to the Opinions of Men ; but our Wills, the Thoughts and Designs of

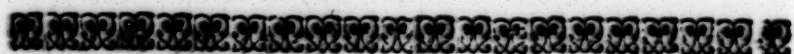
SERMON. our Hearts to the Obedience of Christ.

XI. And the wise Son of Sirach advises;
 Ecclus. iii. 17; *My Son, go on with thy business in Meekness, so shalt thou be beloved of him that is approved; The greater thou art, the more humble thy self, and thou shalt find Favour before the Lord; Many are in high places, and of renown, but mysteries are revealed unto the Meek; And our Saviour himself professes; St. Matt. xi. 25; I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes; Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. These are the Arguments the Scripture makes use of, to perswade us to the Practice of Humility; And they are all briefly summed up in the Words of the Text; Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*



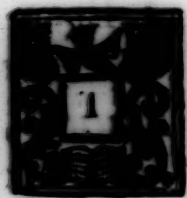
SERMON XII.

Of Poverty of Spirit.



MATT. V. 3.

*Blessed are the Poor in Spirit ;
for Theirs is the Kingdom of
Heaven.*

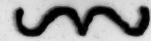


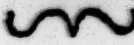
THE *Beatitudes*, or Decla-
rations of Blessedness, with
which our Saviour begins his
Sermon upon the Mount ;
though they seem each of them to be
a recommendation of some *singular Vir-*
tue, and to contain each of them singly
a Promise that such a *particular* Virtue
shall

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S E R M. shall have its *distinct, proper, and peculiar*
 XII. *Reward*; yet This is not so to be understood, as if any of these Virtues singly specified, were to be taken *separately*, exclusive of *Other Virtues*; or as if any of the *Rewards* here distinctly mentioned, were to be looked upon as conferred *separately*, and *divided* from the *Other Constituents* of the Happiness of Heaven: But by a very usual and well-known manner of speaking, wherein a Part is figuratively put for the Whole; as, in *Other* places of Scripture, *Faith* or *Hope* or *Charity*, or *Repentance*, or the *Love* or *Fear* of God, do frequently stand for the *Whole Duty* of a Christian; and the single particulars of *seeing God*, or *being with God*, or of *living for ever*, are intended to include in general *All* the Blessings and Happiness, *All* the Glories and Enjoyments, of the *Heavenly State*; so *Here* likewise our Saviour, in each *Beatitude*, must be understood *in general* to annex the promise of the Happiness of Heaven, to the *universal* Practice of our *whole* Christian Duty. And it is with singular Beauty and Elegancy, as well as with
 great

great Variety and Instructiveness of ex-
 pression, that, in the *former* part of each
 Beatitude, he describes our *Christian Du-*
 ty under the character of some *parti-*
cular eminent Virtue; and, in the *latter*,
 he sets forth to us, under the like num-
 ber of different *distinct Views*, the Glories
 of his heavenly Kingdom: Representing,
 in the *latter* part of each Beatitude, the
Happiness of That eternal State, under
such a particular Figure, and in *such a*
particular Light, as is most agreeably
 correspondent to That *particular* Notion
 of Virtue, under which he had in the
former part represented our *Christian Du-*
 ty. Thus, when the Life of a Christian
 is expressed under the character of being
poor in Spirit, then his Reward is the
Riches of the Kingdom of Heaven: Blef-
sed are the poor in Spirit, for Theirs is
the Kingdom of Heaven. When his *pre-*
sent State is represented as a temporary
Mourning, then his *future* State is the
Comforts and the Joys of Eternity: *Blef-*
sed are they that mourn, for they shall be
comforted. When his Virtue is described
 under the Notion of *Meekness*, in oppo-
 S 3 sition

S E R M.
 XII.


S E R M. XII.  fition to striving violently for Dominion and great Possessions; then his Recompence is the *Inheritance* of the whole *Earth*; even the inheritance of *That New Heaven and New Earth, wherein Meekness is to dwell and reign for ever: Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* When his steady Love of Truth and Right, is set forth under the similitude of *hungering and thirsting after Righteousness*; then the Promise to him is, that he shall be fully *satisfied*, even to the utmost of his Desire: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* When his Religion is considered as consisting, (as to the main Branches of it) in Acts of *Goodness, Charity, and Mercy* towards *Others*; then the Happiness annexed is, that He *himself* shall find *Mercy and Compassion from God: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* And, to mention but One Instance more; When the whole Moral Obedience of a sincere Disciple of Christ, is emphatically comprehended under the single Title of *Purity of Heart*; then the Joys of Heaven

ven are held forth to him correspondently S E R M.
XII.
under *This* View, that he shall be admitted to See, and to dwell for ever in the Presence of, the *Fountain of Purity and Holiness* itself: *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.*

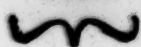
OF *These Beatitudes*, the *First* is what will be the Subject of our present Meditations: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* In discoursing upon which words, I shall *first* endeavour to explain distinctly the Meaning of the Phrase, being *poor in Spirit*; And then, *Secondly*, I shall draw some *Observations*, from the consideration of the Nature of the *Virtue* here spoken of, and of the *Reward* here declared to be annexed to it.

I. IN order to explain distinctly the Meaning of this phrase, being *Poor in Spirit*; it is to be observed, that those two different manners of expression, which we Now usually call *literal* and *figurative*, were in the *Jewish* language frequently denoted by the words *flesh* and *Spirit*. *The flesh*, says our Saviour, *profiteth nothing*; *the words that I speak unto you,*
S 4 they

S E R M. *they are Spirit and they are life; Joh. vi. XII.* 63. His meaning is; He intended not to be understood *literally*, but *figuratively*. To *Be* therefore, or *Do*, any thing *in Spirit*; signifies *being* or *doing* that Thing *figuratively*, in the *spiritual* or *moral*, in the *religious* or in the *abstract* sense; in opposition to the *gross* and more *literal* meaning, in which the same words may at *other* times be understood. Thus when the Angel in the Revelation *carried away St John in the Spirit into the wilderness*; (ch. xvii. 3.) the Meaning is, he was not carried thither *really* and *literally*, but only in a *visionary* Representation. By the like figure of Speech, St Paul, when he was *personally absent*, yet, because his *Name*, his *Commission* and *Authority*, was to be made use of, as if he had *Himself* been There; *I* therefore, says he, *verily, as absent in Body, but present in Spirit*; 1 Cor. v. 3; and again; (Col. ii. 5.) *Though I be absent in the Flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your Order*. And in a still more *sublime* Use of the same Metaphor; *Acts* xx. 22. while he was yet at full liberty, and had

had no violence offered him, yet, prophetic- SERM.
tally foreseeing that *Bonds and Afflic-* XII.
tions were coming upon him, *Behold*, says he, *I go Bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem.* Upon the same Ground of expression, *That Moral Holiness and Purity of the Gospel*, which is opposed to the *ritual and ceremonious Performance of the Jewish Law*, our Saviour calls *Worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth*; John iv. 23. And That absolute *departing from all unrighteousness*, so essentially required in the Gospel, of which the *Jewish Circumcision* was but a Type or Emblem; is by the Apostle most elegantly stiled, *Circumcision in the Spirit*: Rom. ii. 28; *That is not Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh; But---Circumcision is That of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God: For We are the Circumcision, (Phil. iii. 3.) which worship God in the Spirit,---and have no confidence in the flesh.* We Christians, says he, if, according to our Profession, we purify our selves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, We are the *True circumcision*; while the unbelieving Jews, if they

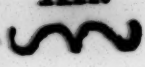
S E R M. they continue impenitent, are, notwithstanding the Covenant of *literal* circumcision, rejected as being, in the sight of God, *uncircumcised in Heart*; Acts vii. 51.

XII.


ANSWERABLE therefore to this figurative manner of expression in so many other places; the Phrase in the Text, *Poor in Spirit*, in contradistinction to *literal Poverty of Estate*, signifies a *Temper of Mind*, disengaged from, and sitting loose to, the *Covetous* and *Ambitious* Desires of the present World: That *moderate* and good Temper or Disposition of mind, which causes those who *have* Riches, not to set their *Hearts* upon them, not to *abuse* them, not to *trust* in them, but to employ them virtuously to the glory of God, and to be at all times willing rather to part with them, than betray the Interest of Truth and Virtue: And which, for the same reason, causes those who have *no* riches, to be *contented*, and not *murmuring*, nor *unthankful* towards God, but willing rather to continue *always* in a mean and low estate, than to gain Riches by unrighteous and unlawful Methods. This is being *poor in Spirit*. This is what
the

Of Poverty of Spirit.

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the Prophet *Isaiab* describes; ch. lxvi. 2; *To This man will I look, saith the Lord;* **SERM. XII.**
even to *Him that is Poor*; to him that is of 
a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.

This is the Temper of those whom St *James* calls the *Poor of this World, Rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom*: The Temper, of which St *Paul* declares, that *Godliness with Contentment is great Gain*; and which our Saviour describes in his character of the Church of *Smyrna*; Rev. ii. 9; *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; but thou art Rich*: Rich in *Virtue*, Rich in *Good Works*, Rich towards *God*. According to *This* account of the virtue of being *poor in Spirit*; an Eminent Instance thereof was the Practice of *Moses*, when he refused to be called the *Son of Pharaoh's daughter*, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of *God*, than to enjoy the pleasures of *Sin* for a Season. And the contrary Spirit, is That which our Saviour speaks of, *Luke* xii. 21; *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

AND

SERM. AND now, having at large explained
 XII. (which was the *First* thing proposed,) the
 ~~~~~ Meaning of this Phrase, being *Poor in Spirit*; It remains in the

II. *Second* place, that I proceed to draw some *Observations*, from the consideration of the Nature of the *Virtue* here spoken of, and of the *Reward* here declared to be annexed to it: *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And

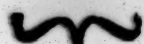
1<sup>st</sup>. FROM what has been said, it appears, that persons of *All* ranks, and conditions whatsoever, are *equally* concerned, in the *Admonition* included in the declaration here made by our Lord. *Poor* and *Rich*, the *Meanest* and the *Greatest*, are equally *Capable* of being, and equally *obliged* to be, *Poor in Spirit*. A person of the *largest* and most *plentiful* Possessions; if he has obtained them by *lawful*, and *honourable* Methods; if they make him not *insolent*, and *oppressive* to his Neighbours; if he uses them with *Sobriety*, *Moderation* and *Temperance*; if he be willing to *relieve* the Necessities of those that want, and be rich in *good Works* as  
 well

well as in *Possessions*; if, being Rich in *S E R M.*  
*this world*, he be not high-minded, nor *XII.*  
*trusts in uncertain Riches*, but in the Li-  
*ving God*, who giveth us richly all things  
*to enjoy*; if he does good, and is ready to  
*communicate*, laying up in store for him-  
*self a good Foundation against the time to*  
*come*, that he may lay hold on eternal  
*Life*; In a word, if he prefers the Com-  
*mandments of God*, before the Increase  
*of his Worldly Interest*; and is willing  
upon any occasion, to run the hazard  
of losing what he possesses, rather than  
depart from the Ways of Truth and  
Virtue: This man, though he possessed  
the *Wealth of the Indies*, and exceeded  
even *Solomon* in all his Grandour; yet  
still he would be included in the de-  
scription given by our Saviour in the  
Text, and would be intituled to the  
*Blessedness of being Poor in Spirit*. On  
the other side, One who is literally  
poor; if he be *unthankful*, and *com-*  
*plaining against God*; if his Poverty be  
brought upon himself, by *Debauchery*  
or *Idleness*; if he be *vicious* as far as his  
Circumstances inable him, and would  
stick



SERM.

XII.



stick at *no unrighteous Practices* to advance his Fortune: Such an one, though he be in the *Lowest Poverty of Estate*, yet can in no wise come under the denomination of being *Poor in Spirit*. It is evident therefore, that these words of our Lord in the Text, do not relate to men's *external Circumstances* or *Condition* in the *World*, but to the *Temper* or *Disposition* of their *Minds*; and consequently that the *Advice* included in This *Beatitude* or *Declaration of Blessedness*, equally concerns persons of *All Ranks* and *Estates* whatsoever. The *Poor*, by Contentedness, Patience, Resignation to the Will of God, and by the Exercise of such Other virtues as are more peculiarly proper to a mean and low estate; and the *Rich*, by preferring at all times the Commands of God, before either the Increase or the Preservation of their Wealth; are (as I said) equally *Capable* of being, and equally *obliged* to be, *Poor in Spirit*. Nevertheless, though the *Virtue* here recommended, is undoubtedly the *Common Duty* of *Both*; yet, since the *Poor* are in This particular under *Fewer Temptations*, and can withdraw their

## Of Poverty of Spirit.

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their Affections from such an Adherence S E R M.  
to the World as is the chief Impediment XII.  
of a Christian life, with much less diffi-  
culty than the *Rich* can do; and since,  
upon *This* account, our Lord and his Apo-  
stles do very frequently pronounce *absolutely* and *in general*, *Wo* to the *Rich*,  
and *Blessedness* to the *Poor*, in such *large*  
and *unlimited* expressions, as may easily  
be mistaken unless interpreted according  
to the Analogy of the *more distinct* man-  
ners of speaking used in *Other* places :  
Therefore,

2dly, I observe, that there is contained  
in the Text a *particular* Ground of  
*Comfort and Support*, to those who are  
*Poor and Destitute*, and under *Mean Cir-*  
*cumstances* in the World; and *particular*  
matter of *Caution*, to those who abound  
in *Riches and Power* and the *Good things*  
of this *present Life*. The *Duty* here re-  
commended by our Lord, of being *Poor*  
*in Spirit*, is (as I have already observed)  
*equally* obligatory to persons of *All* ranks  
and conditions whatsoever; and the *Pro-*  
*mise* annexed, is to *All*, in whatever sta-  
tion they be in the World, who shall at-  
tain

S E R M. tain That Good Temper and Disposition  
XII. of Mind. But now this excellent Tem-



per, this Virtue of being disingaged from the *Covetous* and *Ambitious* Desires of the World, is what the *Poor* are *naturally* led to by their very Circumstances; being under the Advantage of escaping Many Temptations, which Others are continually subject to; and being perpetually called upon by the *Afflictions* of *This* life, to turn their Thoughts to the expectation of a *Better*. It ought therefore to be matter of Just *Comfort* and *Support*, nay even of *Thankfulness* too, under many kinds of temporal Wants and Afflictions; to consider how great an Advantage such circumstances give men, of obtaining this virtue of being *poor in Spirit*: Which our Saviour looked upon as so *natural* and *easy*, and so *likely* to be practised by Persons in That State, that, in places parallel to the Text, he sometimes uses that general and seemingly unlimited expression; *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God*; and, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. For the same reason, on the *other* side, to those

Luke vi.

20.

Mat. v. 4.



those who abound in *Riches* and *Power* S E R M.  
 and the *Good things* of this present Life, XII.  
 the Text plainly suggests *particular* matter  
 of *Caution* ; in annexing the heavenly Re-  
 ward to *That* Temper and Disposition of  
 Mind, which *They in particular* are sur-  
 rounded with so many Temptations to  
 depart from, that our Saviour sometimes  
 pronounces in words *seemingly absolute*,  
*Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have* Luke vi.  
*received your consolation.* It is evident, <sup>24.</sup>  
 his Meaning *cannot* be, to represent *Riches*  
 as a *Crime* ; For he elsewhere expressly  
 explains himself to his Disciples, that he  
 meant not to blame those who *have*, but  
 those who (to the neglect of God and  
 Virtue ) *trust in Riches* : But his Design  
 clearly was, to admonish and put us in  
 mind, how *dangerous* a state, Great Pro-  
 sperity generally is ; how *full of Tempta-*  
*tion*, how ready to *puff men up* ; how apt  
 to make them *covetous, insolent and am-*  
*bitious* ; and to destroy in them that *meek,*  
 that *equitable*, that *moderate* disposition  
 of mind, which in the Text is stiled be-  
 ing *poor in Spirit*. St Paul gives us a  
 remarkable instance of an ill effect in this

S E R M. kind, even of a *little* Prosperity ; when  
 XII. the *Corinthians* falling into Divisions a-  
 among themselves, began to be *puffed up* for  
 1 Cor. iv. *one against another* : Now, says he, ye are  
 8. full, now ye are Rich, ye have reigned as  
*Kings without us*. And our Saviour, in  
 his Admonition to the Church of *Laodi-  
 cea*, hints at a like case ; Rev. iii. 17 ; *Thou  
 sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods,  
 and have need of Nothing ; and knowest not  
 that thou art wretched and miserable and  
 poor and blind and naked*.

3dly, A *Third* observation which may  
 be made upon the words of the Text, is ;  
 that from the *Reason* our Saviour here  
 gives, *why* he pronounces the Poor in  
 Spirit to be Blessed ; (*Blessed are the Poor  
 in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of  
 Heaven* :) From *this Reason*, I say, here  
 annexed by our Saviour, it evidently ap-  
 pears, that *however excellent* Virtue really  
 is in itself, and *truly desirable* even for  
 its own sake ; yet neither are the highest  
 Improvements in Religion, any way in-  
 consistent with having respect to the re-  
 compense of Reward ; nor is the Practice  
 of Virtue (as some have absurdly argued  
 with

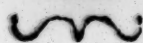
with a most *Vain Affectation*) at all *mer-* SERM.  
*cenary*, when founded upon a View to XII.  
the Happiness of Heaven. *Mercenarineſs*  
ſuppoſes always that Something *Wrong*  
is done, for the ſake of ſuch *Lucre* as  
a virtuous man can never purchaſe upon  
*Such Terms*. But the Happiness of *Hea-*  
*ven*, conſiſts *itſelf* in, and is eſſentially  
conjoined with, the perfection of *Virtue*;  
And the expectation and view of *This*  
Reward, is *itſelf* an *immediate Act*, of  
the *Virtue* of *depending upon God*. Were  
*Temporal Proſperity*, the *certain* and *con-*  
*ſtant* and at all times the *immediate Reward*  
of *Virtue*; it might indeed be alleged, *not*  
that the Practice of it was *mercenary*;  
becauſe *That* always ſuppoſes the doing  
of ſomething which is in itſelf *blame-*  
*worthy*; but it might indeed be alleged,  
in *diminution of the Excellency* of it, as  
we find it was in the caſe of *Job* in the  
time of his Proſperity, *Does Job ſerve*  
*God for nought?* But as the Practice of  
Virtue is in reality *far from being ſecure*  
of any *temporal Recompence*, and the *Re-*  
*ward* it principally relies upon is *ſpiritual*  
and *heavenly*; the expectation of *Such Re-*  
VOL. III. T 2 ward,



S E R M. ward, far from being any diminution, is  
 XII. *itself* (as I now observed) a proper *Act* of  
 ~~~~~ *Virtue*, and of *Dependance upon God*. In  
 the Antient *Heathen World*, the *Virtue*
 of the Best and Bravest men, under the
 Light of Nature and Reason, consisted
 in their *Trusting in God*; in their *Trust-*
ing, *without* any express revealed Promise,
 that the *Judge of the whole Earth* would
 finally *do what was Right*, and would *not*
suffer Virtue to perish equally with *Vice*.
 Under the *Old Testament*, *Moses*, being
 eminently what our Saviour in the Text
 calls *Poor in Spirit*, preferred the *Poverty*
 and *Affliction* of the People of God, be-
 fore the *Riches* and *Honours* of *Pharaoh's*
Court; and it is recorded of him, not in
 a way of *diminishing*, but of *extolling* his
Virtue, that he *esteemed this Reproach* to
 be *greater Riches than the Treasures in*
Egypt; *for he had respect unto the recom-*
pence of the Reward. And when *Job*, in
 the time of his greatest Distress, persisted
 in his Reliance upon God; (*though he slay*
me, yet will I trust in him;) it was not a
 lower, but a higher pitch of the same vir-
 tue in him, (because it was fixing it upon
 a ra-

a rational and consistent Ground,) to de- SERM.
 clare that he *knew that his Redeemer lived,* XII.
and that he should stand at the latter day
upon the Earth. Under the New Testa-
 ment, God himself has, in a more express
 and explicit manner, declared himself to
 be, in the future and eternal state, a Re-
 warder of them that diligently seek him;
 not thereby to diminish, but to increase
 That Virtue, the Practice of which is
 rationally and consistently supported by so
 divine and glorious an Expectation. Ac-
 cordingly, the Apostle St Paul declares Phil. iii.
 concerning himself, that he pressed toward ^{14.}
the Mark, for the prize of the high calling
of God in Christ Jesus. And he perpe-
 tually exhorts all other Christians; so to 1 Cor. ix.
 run, that they may obtain an incorruptible ^{25.}
 Crown; so to behave themselves, as they
 who are continually looking for That Blef- Tit ii. 13.
 sed Hope and the glorious Appearance of
 the Great God and our Saviour Jesus
 Christ: laying hold upon the Hope set be- Heb. vi.
 fore them; even the Hope which is laid ^{18.}
 up for them in Heaven; looking not at the Col. i. 5.
 things which are temporal, but at the 2 Cor. iv.
 things which are eternal; and considering ^{18.}

S E R M. that their *light affliction which is but for*
 XII. *a moment, worketh for them a far more*
 exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

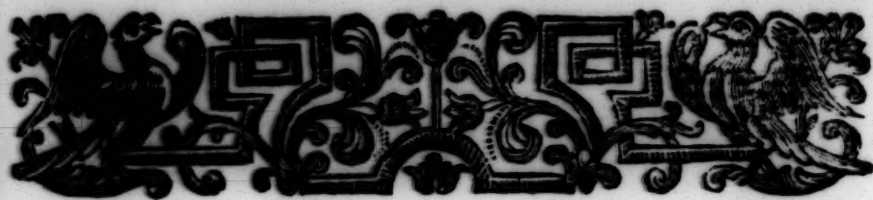


Our Saviour also himself, when his Disciples asked him, saying, *Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?* scrupled not to reply, *Matt. xix. 28; Verily I say unto you,---when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* And elsewhere, in his exhortations

Mat. v. 12. to the same Disciples; *When men shall revile you, says he, and persecute you; rejoice, and be exceeding glad; For great is your Reward in Heaven.* Nay, which is more remarkable than all these; concerning our Lord's own practice, the Scripture declares, that *for the Joy which was set before him, he endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* To imagine therefore, as Some *Enthusiastick* Writers, and Others through a *vain and conceited affectation* have done; that the perfection of Virtue wholly excludes Self-love, and all Regards to any recompence of Reward;

ward ; is taking upon themselves to re-
 proach the *Greatest* and most eminently
Virtuous men, that have lived in All
 Nations and in All Ages ; it is reproaching
 the *Apostles* of our Lord ; it is reproaching
 our *Saviour* in his own Practice ; it is re-
 proaching *God himself*, and the *Nature of*
things which he has made ; who hath
prepared for, and *expressly promised to*,
 them that love and obey him, such good
 things as pass man's Understanding, *which*
Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither
hath it entred into the heart of man,
to conceive. Through the expectation
 of which spiritual and eternal Happi-
 ness, whoever is prevailed upon to live
virtuously, has a Right to apply to him-
 self upon account of Religion in ge-
 neral, what our Saviour in the Text says
 in particular of those who are *poor in*
Spirit ; Blessed are they, for theirs is the
Kingdom of Heaven.

SERM.
XII.



SERMON XIII.

Of the Virtue of CHARITY.



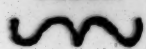
I COR. xiii. 3.

*And though I bestow all my goods
to feed the poor, and though I
give my Body to be burned, and
have not Charity, it profiteth me
nothing.*



IN the following Discourse S E R M.
upon these Words, I shall 1st XIII.
explain *What* That Virtue is,
which the Apostle here calls
Charity; and *What* its oppo-
site *Vice*. 2^{dly}, I shall consider the ex-
cellent

S E R M.
XIII.

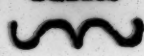


cellent *Effect*, which the general Practice of this Virtue would have in the World; and the great *Stress* which our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly do constantly lay upon it, as being the *Principal Part* and the *main End* of Religion. 3dly, I shall take Notice of the incredible *Mischiefs* arising to Mankind, from the *Want* of this Great Virtue. And *Lastly*, I shall draw some useful *Inferences* from the whole.

I. I AM to explain *What* That Virtue is, which the Apostle here calls *Charity*; and *What* its opposite *Vice*. And here it is evident at first sight to every attentive person, that the word in This place cannot possibly mean, what in common Speech it is now generally used to signify, *Alms* or *Charity to the Poor*. For it is expressly *distinguished* from That, in the very words of the Text itself: *Though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me Nothing.* *Charity* therefore must needs here signify some Virtue or good Habit, of a *more general* and extensive Nature. And indeed the Apostle himself distinctly defines it, in the
verses

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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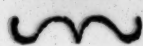
verses following my Text ; *Charity*, says **S E R M. XIII.**
he, *suffereth long, and is kind ; envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up ;* 

doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth ; beareth all things, endureth all things ; and so on ; ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.

From this description it is evident, that by the word *Charity* in the Text, is expressed That *Christian Temper and Disposition*, That *Love and Good-Will towards Mankind*, which is the Great Foundation of All virtues ; and concerning which the same Apostle elsewhere tells us, that the *End of the Commandment is Charity*. Without this *Good and Christian Temper of Mind*, no single *Action* is valuable in the Sight of God : *Though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing* : That is, *Almsgiving*, or the Act of any other Virtue, if it proceeds only from some accidental Cause, and springs not from a right Principle ; if it be accompanied with, and made subservient to, Designs of Pride and Ambition, of imperiousness and dominion,

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minion, of Party, Faction and wordly Powers in matters of Religion ; it is of No Esteem in the Sight of God. Where *Love and Goodness and Christian Temper*, are not the *Governing Principle*; nothing is acceptable, no not even Almsgiving itself. But where *Love* and *universal Charity*, (even *That Love* which St Paul declares to be *the fulfilling of the Whole Law* ; Where *This*) is the *Root* ; *There* indeed, one of its Fairest *Branches*, one of the goodliest *Instances* and *Effects* of it in *particular*, is *Liberality towards our Poor Brethren*. From whence it has come to pass, that *Charity*, which properly signifies *universal Love and Good-Will*, has by frequent use been confined, to the *particular* sense of *Charity to the Poor*. And Great indeed are the Promises which are made in Scripture, to this *single Branch* of *Charity, in particular* : It is stiled by our Saviour ; St Luke xvi. 9 ; a *Making to ourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting Habitations*. Upon which *Application* of the Parable of the Unjust Steward, I cannot but observe

by

by the way, that his remitting to his Lord's Debtors a part of their Debt, ought not to be understood (as it usually is) to have been a defrauding of his Lord; For it is only upon his *former* behaviour, that the Text charges him with *Injustice*: But in this *last* Action, he seems to be represented as obliging his Lord's Debtors out of what *He himself* was still to account for: For which reason, our Saviour compares *his* securing to himself by a timely Bounty the Friendship of those Debtors, (he compares it) to *Our* laying up for ourselves, by works of Charity and Beneficence here on *Earth*, a treasure hereafter in the *Heavens*. Very Great things therefore, I say, are indeed spoken in Scripture, concerning this *particular* Virtue of *Liberality to the Poor*. But it is evident This is *not* what is meant by the word *Charity* in the Text, because it is expressly distinguished in the words themselves, from *bestowing all our Goods to feed the Poor*. And indeed it deserves to be particularly taken notice of, that not only in *This* Text, but in all *Other* places also, without exception, through the whole

New

S E R M.
XIII.

SERM. *New Testament* ; the word *Charity* never
 XIII. once signifies the *giving of Alms*, but al-
 ways That *Universal Love*, That *Christi-*
 an *Temper* and *Goodwill towards All men*,
 of which *Alms-giving to the Poor* is but
 one single Branch, or one particular Ef-
 fect. And *Many other* Instances there
 are, wherein the Signification of words in
 common Use being much changed by cu-
 stom and course of Time, considerable
 Errours and Mistakes are thence apt to
 arise among such as read the Scriptures
 carelessly and without Attention : Which
 Errours can no otherwise be prevented,
 but by taking care to observe, not the bare
Sound of single Words, but the connexion
 and sense and meaning of the *whole Dis-*
course. To Him who thus reads and con-
 siders with Attention, it is manifest that the
Charity, which the Apostle here supposes
 a Person may be wholly void of, though
 he *bestows all his goods to feed the Poor* ; and
 which he at large describes, in the follow-
 ing part of this Chapter ; it is manifest,
 I say, that the Charity here spoken of, is
 That *Christian Temper*, That *universal*
Love and *Benignity of Mind*, which, in
 oppo-

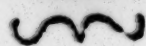
opposition to all worldly Party and Faction, S E R M.
to all Hatred, Contentiousness and Animo- XIII.
sity, imperiousness and desire of imposing 
upon each other, teaches men with meek-
ness and patience, with gentleness and kind-
ness, in imitation of Christ, to be solli-
citous for nothing else, to be earnestly
bent upon no other Design, comparatively
speaking ; but that of promoting univer-
sally the *Knowledge of Truth*, and the
Practice of Righteousness, for the general
Benefit of Mankind.

T H E *Contrary* to which Virtue of uni-
versal Love and Charity, or the proper Vice
of *Uncharitableness*, is That Spirit of Vio-
lence and Arbitrariness, That Love of impe-
riousness and Dominion, That presumptu-
ous Hating and ill-treating of each other,
upon account of unavoidable Differences in
opinion ; things not essential to religion ;
which our Saviour so earnestly warns us
against ; *St Matt. vii. 1 ; Judge not, that
ye be not judged ; For with what judgement
ye judge, ye shall be judged :-----And why
beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Bro-
ther's Eye, but considerest not the Beam that
is in thine own Eye ? St. James in like
manner,*

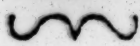
S E R M. manner ; *ch. iv. 12 ; There is one law-giver,*
 XIII. *who is able to save and to destroy ; Who art*
 ~~~~~ *thou, that judgest another ? And St Paul ;*  
*Rom. xiv. 4. Who art thou that judgest*  
*another man's servant ? to his own master he*  
*standeth or falleth : And Why dost thou*  
*judge thy Brother, or why dost thou set at*  
*nought thy Brother ? for we shall all stand*  
*before the judgement-seat of Christ ; ver. 10 :*  
*Let not him that eateth, despise him that*  
*eateth not ; and let not him which eateth*  
*not, judge him that eateth ; ver. 3. For the*  
*kingdom of God is not meat and drink,*  
*(that is, is not Forms and Ceremonies,) but*  
*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy*  
*Ghost ; ver. 17. From the two last-cited*  
*Verses it is evident, that this Duty of Cha-*  
*rity, or of not judging and censuring each*  
*other, is not to be understood as having*  
*place with regard to Instances of plain*  
*wickedness ; but with respect either to such*  
*matters of Speculation, as are not in mens*  
*own Power ; or to things indifferent in*  
*Practice, which are not of moral Obliga-*  
*tion. For, all notorious wickednesses ; such*  
*as are Atheism, and Prophaneness ; Op-*  
*pression, Injustice and Fraud, Rioting, and*  
*Debau-*

Debauchery ; are *Sins* which ( as the Apostle expresses it ) go before *unto Judgment* :  
They are such things, for which we *may* and *ought* to judge ill of men, and to rebuke them sharply and severely for them. But the proper Objects about which the Virtue of *Charity* is to be employed, are Things *indifferent*, concerning which God has given no plain Commandment ; or such Matters of *Opinion*, wherein sincere men may with equal regard to Truth and Virtue, follow their different judgments and conscience. Judging and censuring each other about things of *This* nature, is what the Scripture declares to be altogether *Unchristian*. And the experience of all corrupt Ages has abundantly shown, that mens presumptuous reproaching each other upon account of such things as These ; has been the great Cause of all the Schisms and Divisions, of all the contentions and animosities, which have over-run and in great measure destroyed the Christian world. For the Sins of Schism and Division among Christians, are of a much larger extent, and will be charged to the Account of *More* and of *other kind*

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S E R M.  
XIII.



of persons, than careless and presumptuous men are apt to imagine. All imperiousness and affectation of dominion, which St Peter calls *Lording it over the Heritage of God*; all peevishness and unreasonableness; all contentiousness, fierceness, and animosity of Spirit; all ill Usage of men, and casting names of Reproach upon each other, on account of Matters either of *indifferent Practice* or of *sincere Opinion*; all *Parties and Factions* in Religion, or *Incroachments* upon That Christian (and virtuous, *not* licentious) *Liberty* wherewith our Lord has made his Disciples free; Gal. v. 1. All these things are justly chargeable, with being each in their proportion, the Causes and sad occasions of irreconcilable Divisions among Christians. From whence it plainly appears, that not only *particular Persons*, but even the greatest *Bodies of men*, may be guilty of That Vice, which the Apostle in the Text calls *not having Charity*, or not having That Christian Temper and universal Love, without which all other even the *greatest* appearances of Goodness will *profit men nothing*. The  
Church

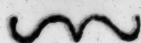


Church of *Rome*, for Example, is a stupendous Instance of This: who, excluding (as much as in them lies) from Christian Communion and from the Hopes of Salvation, all men who cannot embrace the Doctrines of Popes and Councils and other humane Inventions, as of like necessity with the Gospel itself; do, by the Greatest Schism that ever was in the World, cut in sunder (or rather cut themselves off from) That Spouse or Body or Universal Church of Christ, which can possibly be but One, One Temple built upon the *Foundation*, and upon the *Doctrine*, of Christ and his Apostles only; and, though consisting of different *parts*, varying from each other in external Forms, as Members of the same living Body differ in Shape from each other; yet all united in one Holy Band of *Righteousness* and *Charity*.

II. HAVING thus at large explained *What* That Virtue is, which the Apostle in the Text calls *Charity*, and *what* its opposite *Vice*; I proceed in the 2d place to consider the excellent *Effect*, which the general Practice of this Virtue would

S E R M.

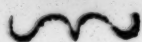
XIII.



have in the World ; and the great *Stress* which our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly do constantly lay upon it, as being the *Principal Part* and the *main End* of Religion. That nothing is so much wanting, in order to set the World right, as a *charitable Spirit* and *Christian Temper* among those who call themselves Christians, is evident to All men. That the Gospel *may still* be propagated ; nay, that it may *best* and most *effectually* ; nay, that indeed it *can only* be propagated, by the Same means with which our Saviour *began* to propagate it ; by *strength* of Reason and *clearness* of Evidence, by good *Example* of *Virtue* and *Righteousness* in *Practice*, joined with *Love* and true *Charity* towards the Persons of All men ; is demonstrable from the Nature of *Things* and of *Men*. The *Harvest* of persons capable of receiving the Truth, when laid before them plainly and distinctly in the Spirit of Meekness and Charity, is very great : The *Labourers* only, saith our Saviour, are too *few* ; *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest*. Did  
Christians

Christians universally labour, after This manner ; the *Effect* could not but be, that the *Knowledge of the Lord would fill the Earth, as the Waters cover the Sea* : The Vine which God's right hand has planted, would *spread out her Branches unto the Sea, and her Boughs unto the River* : Not by any *One Party* of Christians swallowing up and destroying all the rest ; but by each of them severally taking away their uncharitable Distinctions, removing their needless Particularities, and the unchristian Bars and Confinements set up by humane invention ; and uniting upon the One immoveable Foot, of the everlasting Gospel of Truth and Charity. Marvellous are the Promises of Blessings and Happiness, which in the Prophetick part of Scripture are made to the Church of God, when it shall in *This manner* prevail upon the Earth. *With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the Meek of the Earth ; and he shall smite the Earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips, shall he slay the wicked : And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loyns, and faithfulness the*

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S E R M. *girdle of his reins: The wolf also shall*  
 XIII.  *dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall*  
 ~~~~~  *lie down with the Kid; and the Calf and*  
 the young Lion and the fatling together,
 and a little Child shall lead them:-----They
 shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy
 Mountain; for the Earth shall be full of
 the knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters
 cover the Sea:-----And he shall set up an
 Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble
 the outcasts of Israel, and gather together
 the dispersed of Judah, from the four
 corners of the Earth; Isai. xi. 4, &c.
 And in the Revelation of St John, the
 like Prophecies are again repeated; ch. xiv.
 6; xi. 15; I saw an Angel having the
 Everlasting Gospel to preach unto Them
 that dwell on the Earth, and to every na-
 tion and kindred and tongue and people:
 -----And there were great Voices in Hea-
 ven, saying; The Kingdoms of this World
 are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of
 his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and
 ever. Whether these and the like Prophe-
 cies shall yet finally have a literal Accom-
 plishment, by an universal Prevalency of
 the Gospel of Peace on Earth; or whe-
 ther

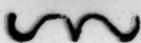
ther they shall have their full and literal S E R M.
completion, *only* in That *New Heaven* XIII.
and New Earth, wherein Righteousness is
to *dwell* for ever; is still a Secret in the
Breast of Providence, which we ought not
to be over-confident in explaining. But
in *This* we cannot err; in exhorting in
the mean time all Christians continually,
to put on that Spirit of Christ, That Spi-
rit of Meekness and true Humility, That
Spirit of Love and universal Charity,
That Christian *Temper* and disposition of
Mind; which *alone* can promote the
Kingdom of God, and His righteousness:
Which, *so far* as 'tis at any time practised,
causes Christianity to become in Fact a
Light shining before men, inviting them
to glorify our Father which is in Heaven:
And which, if it was the *Universal* Be-
haviour of Christians, would certainly
cause the Gospel *universally* to prevail,
by means of that irresistible Excellency
and Beauty in which it would appear,
when All Contentions and Animosities,
all unreasonable *Prejudices* against each
other, all Parties and Factions and Names
of Reproach among Christians upon ac-

S E R M. count of differences in opinion, were laid
 XIII. aside; and every man, making the Gospel alone the Rule of his *own* Actions, and having no Desire to have *dominion* over the Consciences of his Brethren, but all of them instructing and exhorting each other (according to the respective *Order* and Nature of their several *stations* and *capacities*,) with mutual Love and Forbearance, as Fellow-servants of one common Lord by whom they must All at last be judged; bent their Whole Endeavours towards *One only* uniform End, the promoting amongst men the *Knowledge of Truth* and the *Practice of Right*. Were This (I say) the *General* Behaviour of Christians, according to the Obligations of their most Holy Profession; it could not fail but the Gospel would be embraced universally over all the Earth. And for This reason it seems to be, that our Saviour in all his Discourses constantly lays so peculiar a *Stress* upon this Duty of *Love and Charity and Good-will towards Men*; as if it was the *Principal Part* and *Great Design* of Religion; and as if he had always a particular View to that

that general Corruption and Destruction S E R M.
of true Christianity, which he foresaw XIII.
would for so many Ages together be the
consequence of *Want of Christian Temper*
among those who called themselves the
Christian World. *A New Commandment*,
says he, *I give unto you, that ye love one*
another; Joh. xiii. 34. *A New Command-*
ment; Not that it was not *Always* mens
Duty in general; but that it was to be,
in a *New and distinguishing manner*, the
Character and Badge of Christians; the
Effect and the Support, the Life and Es-
sence of true Christianity. The *Jews*
hated the *Samaritans*, and the *Samari-*
tans hated the *Jews*; and by This means
their Schism was kept up for ever. But
Christians, were to love their Brethren;
to love also those that differed from them;
nay, to show all gentleness even towards
those that most fiercely opposed them;
that, by this godlike behaviour, they
might by degrees gain and win all men
over to the acknowledgement of the
Truth. It was to be their distinguishing
Character; Joh. xiii. 35; *By this shall all*
men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye
2 have

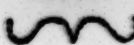
S E R M.

XIII.



have Love one to another. As imperiousness, and affectation of dominion, and persecution, is essentially the Spirit of *Antichrist*; so the *Christian* Spirit and Temper, is Meekness, Charity, Forbearance and Love. The *True* Disciples of Christ, are to be distinguished from false prophets, from wolves in sheeps clothing; not by mens crying, *Lord, Lord*; not by their fierceness for what *They* call the Temple of God, and which perhaps is nothing but some Humane Invention: But *by their Fruits*, says our Lord, *ye shall know them.* By their *Fruits*; that is, by those *Christian* virtues, by those Good works, which the Scripture elsewhere stiles the *Fruits of the Spirit*. Our Saviour *himself*, desired to be judged of, by the *Goodness* as well as by the *Greatness* of his Works: And therefore, in his parable of a *Kingdom divided against itself*, the Reason he gives for asserting the unpardonableness of mens ascribing his mighty works to the assistance of the *Evil One*, is the *Goodness* and *Beneficence* of the Works. In another

ther place, comparing together the Great S E R M.
and most important Duties of Religion; XIII.
next to the Love of God, he makes Cha-
rity towards Men, the Grand Design of
Religion: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy
God with all thy Heart; This, saith he,
is the first and great Commandment; And
the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love
thy Neighbour as thyself.* The Apostle
St John, after his Master's example, lays
the same stress upon this excellent Virtue;
declaring, that without this Love towards
Men, there can be no such thing as a
sincere Love towards God; 1 Job. iv. 20;
*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his
Brother, he is a Liar; For---This com-
mandment have we from Him, that he who
loveth God, love his Brother also.* His
meaning is; All pretences of Love to-
wards God, which produce not true Vir-
tue, and particularly Love and Charity
towards our Brethren; are nothing more
than mere *Enthusiasm*. Again: he tells
us, That without this universal Charity,
no pretended zeal for Religion can be sin-
cere; ch. ii. 10; *He that loveth his Bro-
ther, abideth in the Light;---but he that
hateth*

SERM. *hateth his Brother, is in darkness, and*
 XIII. *walketh in darkness; that is, he is alto-*
 *gether ignorant of the true Nature and*
Spirit of Christianity. Lastly; That the
want of this Virtue, and the prevalency
of the contrary imperious Spirit, is one
principal Mark and Character of Anti-
christ; ch. iii. 10; In this the children of
God are manifest, and the children of the
Devil; whosoever doth not righteousness,
is not of God, neither he that loveth not
his Brother; For this is the Message that
ye heard from the beginning, that we should
love one another. St Peter in like manner;
1 Pet. iv. 8; Above all things, saith he,
have fervent Charity among yourselves;
for Charity shall cover the Multitude of
Sins: The Sense is; not that any one
particular Virtue, such as that which we
Now call Charity to the Poor, shall excuse
men from the practice of other Duties, or
in the practice of any Vices or Immora-
lities; but that That general Christian
Temper and good Spirit of Love and
sincere Desire of doing good to all men,
which he here calls having fervent Cha-
riety among yourselves, shall cover Many
 Errors.

Of the Virtue of Charity.

301

Errours, many *such* imperfections and fail- S E R M.
ings, as a truly good Christian, who has XIII.
this excellent root of Virtue in him, can
be supposed to be guilty of. The very
same Notion is likewise perpetually in-
culcated by *St Paul*; Col. iii. 14; *Above*
all these things put on Charity, which is
the Bond of Perfection: The word which
we here render *Charity*, is in *This*, as in
all other places, *Ἀγάπη* Love, *Universal*
Love towards Mankind. Again; 1 *Tim.* i.
4, 5; *Neither give heed*, says he, *to Fables*
and endless Genealogies, (that is, to matters
of mere *Form*, *Order of Successions*, and
the like, which the *Jews* were apt to lay
so great Strefs upon;) But *The End of*
the Commandment, (the Great Design of
the *Christian Law*,) *is Charity*. Last-
ly, and to conclude: In That Noble Dis-
course, whereof my Text is a part, he
thus, eloquently and affectionately, incul-
cates the same Doctrine. *Though I speak*,
says he, *with the Tongues of Men and of*
Angels, and have not Charity; *I am be-*
come as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cym-
bal. And though I have the gift of Pro-
phesy, and understand all Mysteries, and
all

SERM. *all Knowledge; and though I have all*
 XIII. *Faith, so that I could remove Mountains;*
 ~~~~~ *and have no Charity; I am nothing. And*  
*though I bestow all my Goods to feed the*  
*Poor, and though I give my Body to be*  
*burned, and have not Charity; it profiteth*  
*me nothing. In St Paul's opinion there-*  
*fore; though a man could preach like an*  
*Angel, and had the Knowledge of an in-*  
*spired Prophet; Though he had the Faith*  
*of an Apostle, and the Zeal of a Martyr,*  
*and gave away in Alms to the Poor, even*  
*his whole Substance: yet, if his Religion*  
*consisted in Party and Faction, and pro-*  
*moted uncharitableness, imperiousness, and*  
*ill-treatment of Other men; even not-*  
*withstanding all those Great Excellencies,*  
*it would profit him nothing. The Rea-*  
*son of this lofty assertion, follows in the*  
*8th verse: For, all other excellent Gifts,*  
*and even Virtues themselves, are only of*  
*temporary continuance; But Charity Alone,*  
*never faileth: Whether there be Prophe-*  
*cies, they shall fail; whether there be*  
*Tongues, they shall cease; whether there be*  
*Knowledge, it shall vanish away: Faith*  
*shall be swallowed up in Vision, and Hope*  
*shall*



*Of the Virtue of Charity.*

303

shall terminate upon *Injoyment* ; But the S E R M.  
*Love of God and of our Brethren*, shall, XIII.  
when *This world is passed away*, continue  
and increase for ever. That every *man*,  
and every *Number of men*, who call them-  
selves *Christians*, may seriously consider  
this important Truth ; God of his infi-  
nite Mercy grant, &c.



S E R M O N

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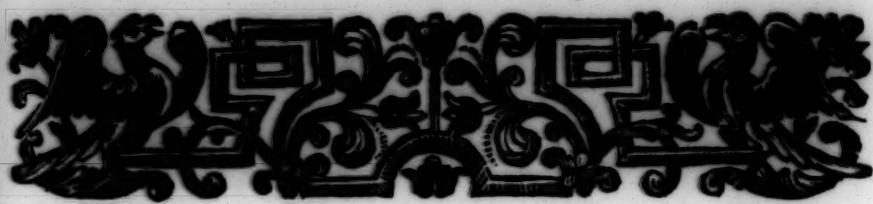
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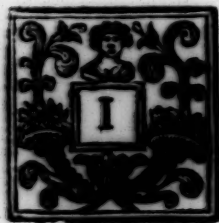
# SERMON XIV.

Of the Virtue of CHARITY.



I COR. xiii. 3.

*And though I bestow all my goods  
to feed the poor, and though I  
give my Body to be burned, and  
have not Charity, it profiteth me  
nothing.*



IN discoursing upon these SERM.  
words of the Apostle, I pro- XIV.  
posed 1<sup>st</sup>, To explain *What*  
That Virtue is, which he  
here calls *Charity*; and *What*  
its opposite *Vice* is: 2<sup>dly</sup>, To consider  
VOL. III. X the



S E R M. the excellent *Effect*, which the general  
 XIV. Practice of this Virtue would have in the  
 ~~~~~ World; and the great *Stress* which our  
 Saviour and his Apostles accordingly do
 constantly lay upon it, as being the *Prin-*
cipal Part and the *Main End* of Religi-
 on: 3dly, To take Notice of the incre-
 dible *Mischiefs* arising to Mankind, from
 the *Want* of the Practice of this Great
 Virtue: And *lastly*, To draw some use-
 ful *Inferences* from the Whole.

T H E *Two Former* of these Heads, I
 have already gone through: And have
 shown; *That* the word *Charity* here, does
 not signify the *particular Virtue* of giving
Alms to the Poor; For 'tis expressly di-
 stinguished from *That*, in the very words
 of the Text itself; But, that it is here
 made use of to express a more *general* and
 extensive Virtue, even *That Christian Tem-*
per and Disposition, *That general Love and*
Good-Will towards Mankind, which is the
 Great Foundation of *All Virtues* and good
 Habits; teaching men with Meekness and
 Patience, with *Tenderness* and *Affection*,
 with *Gentleness* and *Kindness*, after the Ex-
 ample of Christ, to labour and be solicitous
 for

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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for Nothing else, comparatively speaking, S E R M.
than the promoting universally the *Know-* XIV.
ledge of Truth and the *Practice of Righte-*
ousness in the Word. 

That the contrary *Vice* therefore, or
the proper Sin of *Uncharitableness*, is
That Spirit of Violence and Imposition,
which reigns too much amongst Man-
kind; That Love of Imperiousness and
Dominion, That presumptuous Hating
and ill-treatment of each other, which
prevails so much in the World, upon ac-
count of Matters either of *indifferent*
Practice or of *sincere Opinion*.

That the *Effect*, which the *General*
Practice of the *Charity* or *Christian Tem-*
per here recommended by the Apostle,
would produce in the World, could not
fail to be *The universal Spreading of the*
Gospel of Truth and Peace, over all the
Nations of the Earth.

A N D, *That* for *This reason* it is, that
our Saviour and his Apostles accordingly
do constantly lay so *Great and Singular a*
Stress upon *This Virtue*, as being the
Principal Part, and the *main End* of Re-
ligion.

V O L. III.

X 2

III. I P R O-

SERM.
XIV.

III. I PROCEED now, in the *Third* place, to consider distinctly the incredible *Mischiefs* arising to Mankind, from the *Want* of the practice of this excellent Virtue. And here opens itself to our View, one of the most melancholy Scenes, that ever was beheld upon the face of the Earth. Our Blessed Saviour came to teach Mankind a Doctrine of Truth and Purity, of Simplicity and Plainness; A Doctrine of Religion, which All men might easily understand, and which 'tis infinitely every man's Interest to practise; A Doctrine, the Whole of which, as he himself assures us, is summed up in Two particulars, the Love of God, and of our Neighbour; the Worship of the One True God, the Father and Lord of all things, thro' the One True Mediatour whom he himself has appointed, in opposition to every kind of Idolatry; and a constant sincere endeavour of doing Good to all men, in opposition to every degree of Unrighteousness, Iniquity and Uncharitableness. To the Happiness of Mankind even in *This* Life, 'tis manifest These are the Means which would contribute

Of the Virtue of Charity.

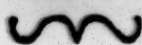
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S E R M.

XIV.

tribute incomparably more, than any other Methods whatsoever. But the *principal* View wherewith our Lord gave these Commands to his Followers, was that they might practise them in expectation of God's having appointed a day, wherein he would judge the World in righteousness by his Son Jesus Christ; and reward every man finally, in the *future and eternal* State, according to their Works. And because 'twas thus principally with regard to the *Life to come*, that our Lord gave all his Commandments; therefore with great earnestness he continually cautioned his Disciples, that as he had declared his *own Kingdom* was not to be of This World, so *They* should continually take strict heed *after him*, never to make their *preaching of His religion* a pretence for aspiring after *temporal Authority*. In a Parable framed on purpose, he commands his Followers not to take upon them to pull up the *Tares*, lest they root up also the *Wheat with them*. The meaning of which is not, that Magistrates are not to cut off *Malefactors*; but that in matters merely *religious*, Christi-

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XIV.



ans are not to presume to judge the Consciences of each other, before the day of the Lord cometh. *The Princes of the Gentiles*, says he, *exercise Dominion over them, and they that are Great, exercise Authority upon them: But it shall not be so among You; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for Many; Matt. xx. 25.* So long, and so far, as Christianity was planted according to This Standard of its Great Author; in plainness and Simplicity of uncorrupt Doctrine; and in meekness, and Humility, Love and Charity, in Practice: When

Acts ii. 42.
46. Christians continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of Bread and in Prayers;----continuing daily with one accord in the Temple,----cating their Meat with gladness and singleness of Heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people; When the Multitude of them that believed, were of one Heart, and of One Soul; and great Grace

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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was upon them All; Acts iv. 32, 33. SERM.
XIV.

Then did their Light shine forth indeed before men, and cause them to praise and glorify the God of Heaven: Then were they in reality and indeed, acceptable to God, and approved of Men: Then was the Gospel truly and conspicuously, like a City upon an Hill, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's people Israel: It was the Praise and Wonder of those who beheld its Blessed Effects, and might have been the Joy of the whole Earth. Had Christians continued, as St Paul beseeched them, Eph. iv. 1; to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: Had they considered the Argument he urges, that there could be but One Body and One Spirit, even as they were called in One Hope of their Calling; One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism; One God and Father of all, who is Above All: Had they continued, (according to the exhortation and inference he draws from this Argument;) to

ver 6.

S E R M.

XIV.

ver. 15.

Speak the Truth in Love, that they might grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; From whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every Joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in Love: The Church of God, established upon This Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; might in its Whole Building fitly framed together, have grown up into One Holy Temple in the Lord.

BUT an Enemy soon sowed Tears among this Wheat, and contentious men very early began to build Hay and Stubble upon the Foundation of Christ. Not content with the Simplicity and Plainness of the Gospel, which could possibly furnish no Materials for Strife and Contention, vain men soon began to mix their own uncertain Opinions with the Doctrine of Christ; and had no other way to give them Weight and Authority, but by endeavouring to force them upon the Faith of Others, And out of This Bramble, as Jo-
tham

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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tham foretold the men of *Shechem*, *Judg.* S E R M. XIV.
ix. 15; out of this *Bramble* hath a *Fire*
proceeded, which hath devoured the *Ce-*
dars of Lebanon: Or, as the Prophet *E-*
zekiel expresses himself concerning the
Vine of *Israel*; *ch. xix. 14*, *A Fire is gone*
out of a Rod of her Branches, which hath
devoured her Fruit. For, from a desire
of being *Many Masters*; from a Desire
of forcing mutually our *own* Opinions
upon Others, instead of exhorting them
to study and obey the Gospel of *Christ*;
have arisen Strifes and Contentions, Ha-
tred and Uncharitableness, Schisms and
Divisions without End. *From whence*, Ch. iv. 1.
says St James, come Wars and Fightings
among you? come they not hence, even of
your Lusts that war in your Members?
From a zeal for the Religion and for the
Commandments of *Christ*, from a Con-
cern for the promoting of Truth, Righ-
teousness and Charity, 'tis evident in the
nature of things, and in the experience
of All Ages, that Wars and Fightings,
Hatred and Animosities, never have, nor
can proceed. *These* precious Fruits have
always sprung from That Root of Bit-
terness,

S E R M. *terness, a zeal for the Doctrines and Com-*
 XIV. *mandments of Men, a Striving for tem-*
 ~~~~~ *poral Power and Dominion. At the first*  
*Beginning of the working of the Mystery*  
*of Iniquity, the Builders of Hay and*  
*Stubble upon the foundation of Christ went*  
*no farther than to Censoriousness and Un-*  
*charitableness towards their Brethren. A-*  
*gainst whom, St. Paul argues, Rom, xiv.*  
*10; Why dost thou judge thy Brother, or*  
*why dost thou set at nought thy Brother?*  
*for we shall all stand before the judgement-*  
*seat of Christ. But in process of time;*  
*as Water, at a further Distance from the*  
*Fountain, divides itself continually into*  
*more streams, and becomes less pure, and*  
*more mixt, and more different from the*  
*Nature of the Fountain itself; so, when*  
*men had once departed from the Simpli-*  
*city and Purity of the Doctrine, and from*  
*the Charitableness and Goodness of the*  
*Spirit of Christ, their Hatred and Ani-*  
*mosities against each other increased con-*  
*tinually, till they literally fulfilled That*  
*remarkable Prophecy of our Saviour, in*  
*which is contained a most Severe Reproof*  
*of those Corrupters of the Gospel of*  
 Truth



## Of the Virtue of Charity.

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Truth and Charity, who he foresaw would arise in following Ages; St. *Luk. xii. 49*; *I am come to send Fire on the Earth*; And *Matt. x. 34*; *Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth; I came not to send Peace, but a Sword: For I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the daughter against her Mother; -----and a man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.* Nay, even that description which he gives of the Persecution which the *Jews* should bring upon his Disciples, *Job. xvi. 2*; *The Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God Service*; even *This*, in Time, came to be fulfilled by *one Christian*, (so they still called themselves;) it was fulfilled, I say, by *one Christian upon another*. Till at last, when the Measure of iniquity was become full, and the Power of Popery was compleatly seated and established in the Temple of God; then, in like manner as our Lord declared concerning That generation of the *Jews* in which He himself lived, that *the Blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the World,-----from the Blood of righteous*

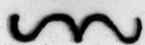
S E R M.  
XIV.  
~~~~~

S E R M. *teous Abel* even unto That day, should be
 XIV. *required of that Generation*; so likewise,
 and for the very same Reason, concern-
 ing That Body of men, which calls itself
 the *Christian* and the *Catholick Church*,
 does the Scripture wonderfully foretell,
 Rev. xviii. that *in Her* should be found the *Blood of*
 24. *Prophets and of Saints, and of all that*
are slain upon the Earth. Since the Re-
 formation, and *in Places* where it has
 happily prevailed, this wicked and un-
 christian Spirit has in very great measure
 abated: But still, ('tis to be feared,) even
 among too many *Protestants themselves*,
 Zeal for particular Forms and Ceremo-
 nies, more than for Virtue and Religion
 itself; A Concern for the distinguishing
 Doctrines of Parties, more than for the
 Commandments of our Common Lord;
 A Desire of compelling each Other's
 Faith, more than of reforming our Own
 Manners; continues to hinder the growth
 of Christian Charity, and, like the Worm
 at the Root of *Jonah's Gourd*, to eat out
 the Vitals of true Religion. We read
 every day in St *John*, that *whosoever doth*
not Righteousness, is not of God, neither
he

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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he that loveth not his Brother; and that S E R M.
if any man say, *I love God, and hateth* XIV.
his Brother, he is a Liar: And yet we
are still so weak, as frequently to reverse
the Text, and think we can no way so
zealously show forth our *Love* towards
God, as by *Hatred* and *ill treatment* of
our *Brethren*. Our Lord severely rebu-
ked his Disciples, telling them *they knew*
not what Spirit they were of, when they
would have called for Fire from Heaven
upon the *Samaritans*: And yet men are
still so foolish, as to be continually de-
sirous of using Methods of Force, even
Christians against *each other*. The *imme-*
diat and *necessary Effects* of This Un-
charitableness and Bitterness of Spirit, is,
that the true Fruits of Virtue and Righte-
ousness and real Goodness are (compa-
ratively speaking) neglected and lightly
esteemed; that Superstition and Bigottry
and absurd Notions of Religion prevail
among the *Weak*; and those who have
more discernment, who have discernment
enough to *see*, and yet not enough to *see*
Through these Absurdities, are tempted to
Atheism, Scepticism, and Infidelity. All
which

S E R M. which things being observed by those who
 XIV. are *without*; instead of being moved to
 *glorify our Father which is in Heaven*, as
 our *Light shining before them* ought to
 cause them to do; they are on the con-
 trary, by our *Works of Darknes* which
 they beheld, confirmed in their Unbelief;
 and *the Name of God is blasphemed among*
the Gentiles, through Us, as it is written.
 This is the Great Reproach to Christians,
 and the Great Impediment to the Pro-
 gress of Christianity. This is that which
 makes the *Pagan* and *Mahometan* World
 still superiour in Number to the Christian;
 and that even in the midst of the Light
 of the Gospel itself, yet Infidelity prevails
 beyond measure.

B U T 'tis an easy thing to see the *ill*
consequences of Uncharitableness, and to
 complain of the *Mischiefs* that arise from
 the Divisions among Christians. The
 Difficulty is, and the more useful part is,
 to find how to *remedy* them. Now 'tis
 very evident there are but *Two* possible
 Ways by which the Divisions among
 Christians can have an End put to them.
 The *one* is, what all parties of Men are
 generally

generally very fond of, but which can S E R M.
never possibly be accomplished; and if XIV.
it could, 'twould be the Destruction of 
Christianity itself. The *other* is, what
would very easily and effectually cure the
Evil, but what All parties are always
very unwilling to put in Practice. The
Method of curing Divisions, which Every
party of men are very fond of, is, that
those of all *other opinions* would at a ven-
ture unite in submitting to *Them*: The
Effect of which, if it could be accom-
plished, would be, not the Establishment
of the Gospel of Christ, but of some
Worldly Power and Dominion in the
stead of it; as is more particularly noto-
rious, in all Places where Popery has
prevailed. But indeed *This* method of
Union is altogether impossible to be ac-
complished. For as every party of Chri-
stians reproaches all *others*, with causing
Schisms and Divisions by not coming
into *Their* opinions; so the *others* reci-
procally cast the same reproach upon
Them, for not coming into *Theirs*: And
thus the Fire of mutual Uncharitableness
is blown up for ever, while Both sides
are

SERM. are perhaps equally, or perhaps unequal-
 XIV. ly, in Fault. For the case is exactly the
 same, in *Moral* matters, as in things *natural*. In Nature and Truth, *real Motion* belongs only to That Body, which changes the *Absolute Place* it was in; but *relative Motion*, or the parting of one body from another, belongs equally to the *Body from which another is removed*, as to *That which itself moves*. Thus likewise in *Morality*; the *Real Sin*, or *Guilt*, of *causing Schisms and Divisions*, lies always at the door of Him who departs from the *Truth*, and who lays the *Stress* of Religion where Christ has not laid it: But the *relative Schisms or Divisions themselves*, by which Christians are parted from each other, are always, by All Parties equally, laid to the Charge of their Adversaries; And it must not be expected, that they can ever be cured, by any *One Party* swallowing up *all the rest*. The *Other* therefore, and the *Only True Method*, of remedying Divisions; but which All parties are generally very unwilling to put in Practice is, that every party of Christians, forbearing to insist
 and

and to lay too much Weight on their own distinguishing Doctrines or Inventions of Men, sincerely endeavour to unite upon the foundation of the Gospel itself, that is, the original undisputed Doctrines and Commandments of Christ; and in all other things, by mutual Charity and Forbearance, Tendernefs and Goodwill, preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; according to St Paul's direction; *Rom. xiv. 3; Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.*

IV. IT remains, in the *Last* place, that I draw some useful Inferences from what has been said, and so conclude. And

1st, FROM what has been said concerning the Nature of the *Virtue of Charity*, and its *opposite Vice*; we may see clearly whence it comes to pass, that St Paul in his Catalogue of great Wickednesses; *Gal. v. 20*; among uncleannesses, idolatry, murders, drunkenness and reveling, reckons also *hatred, variance and strife, seditions* (or Schisms,) *heresies and such like*, as being *Works of the Flesh*. 'Tis evident, *differing in judgement or opi-*

S E R M. *nion*, is not a work of the *Flesh*, but of
 XIV. the *Understanding*. *Disapproving* the o-
 pinions of those whom a man sincerely
 thinks to be in the *wrong*, is not a work
 of the *Flesh*, but the *necessary* Duty of a
Christian. The Crimes therefore which
 St Paul speaks of, are the presumptuous
 affecting of worldly Power, and the cau-
 sing of Strifes and uncharitable Divisions
 among Christians, by laying the *Stress* of
 Religion upon particular distinguishing
 Doctrines and Practices, on which our
 Saviour himself has laid *No Stress*. These
 are *indeed*, Works of the *Flesh*: These
 are destructive of That Love and *Charity*
 and Christian Temper, which is so fun-
 damental in Religion, that, whosoever
 wants it, though *he bestows all his goods*
to feed the poor, and though he gives his
Body to be burned, yet, the Text tells us,
it shall profit him nothing. The expres-
 sion is of the same kind with That in
Gal. v. 2; *Behold, I Paul say unto you,*
that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall pro-
fit you nothing: Circumcision, was in its
 own Nature a thing of indifference; *Cir-*
cumcision, as he elsewhere tells them, *is*
nothing.

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nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing. SERM. XIV.
But if they forced it upon the Gentile Converts as a *Necessary part of Christianity*, This was a destroying of Charity, and their Religion (he declares) would be in vain.

2dly, FROM what has been above said concerning the true Nature and Spirit of Christianity, we may easily answer That Question usually put by those of the Church of Rome; *Where was the Reformed Religion: before the Times of the Reformers?* The Answer is: 'Twas Then, just where it is Now, even in the Gospel of Christ; studied and obeyed by all Sincere Followers of Truth and Charity. Which Rule, whosoever in Any Age, or in Any Country of the World, has walked by; That person was a true Disciple of Christ: And whosoever follows any Other Rule, is in No Age and in No Country a good Christian. Gal. vi. 16; *As many as walk according to This Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.* For wheresoever two or three are gathered together in the Name of Christ, (whether they be two or three
V O L. III. Y 2 thousands,

S E R M. *thousands, or two or three single persons ;)*

XIV. *There (says our Lord) am I in the midst of them.*

3dly, F R O M what has been above said, we may easily understand in what Sense it is, that *Zeal* and *Moderation* are *Both of them* in Scripture equally recommended as Virtues. When the Question is concerning things *indifferent* in their own nature, concerning matters of *Party* and *Divisions* among *Men*, concerning any *Doctrines* or *Practices* of *Human Appointment*; then the Rule is, *Let your Moderation be known unto all men*; Phil. iv. 15: And *Ephes. iv. 2*; *With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love*. But when the matter in question is a *Moral Virtue*, or a *plain and express Command of God*; Then, *it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing*; Gal. iv. 18. For *Christians*, are to be a people *zealous of good Works*; Tit. ii. 14. And to be *careless* or *indifferent* in the cause of *Virtue and Righteousness*, is being in the case of the *Church of Laodicea*; Rev. iii. 13; *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold*

Of the Virtue of Charity.

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nor hot ; I would thou wert cold or hot ; So S E R M. XIV.
then, because thou art luke-warm, and nei-
ther cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of
my Mouth. In matters of *Party and*
Factions ; in questions relating to the
Powers and to the Doctrines of *Men* ; God
knows, men are apt to be *Hot enough* :
But for enquiring impartially after the
Knowledge of *Truth*, and for promoting
the Practice of universal *Righteousness and*
Charity ; 'twere well if the Warmest a-
mong Christians in these corrupt Ages,
were in their Zeal even so much as *luke-*
warm.

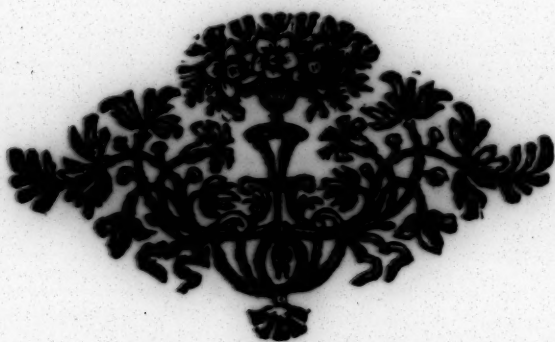
4thly and *Lastly*, FROM what has been
said, we may learn the true Meaning of
that Exhortation of St Paul ; 1 Cor. i. 10 ;
I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of
our Lord Jesus Christ, that---there be no
divisions among you, but that ye be perfect-
ly joined together in the same mind, and in
the same judgement. His Meaning is not,
that they must be all exactly of *one opi-*
nion in every thing : For *such* an Unity
cannot possibly arise, but either from *per-*
fect and infallible Knowledge, which is
not attainable in This World ; or from

SERM. gross Ignorance and Darknes, which is an
 XIV. effect of great Corruption. But the plain
 meaning of St Paul is, that they ought
 to be joined together in the same charitable
 mind, and in the same charitable judgement
 towards each other, notwithstanding any
 differences in Opinion. Thus he expressly
 explains himself, *Rom. xv. 5*; God
 grant you to be like-minded one towards
 another: He does not say, like-minded or
 of like judgement, concerning Things;
 For That is no man's Power: But like-
 minded, or alike well-affectioned, towards
 each Other's Persons. So likewise, *Eph.*
iv. 3; Endeavouring to keep the Unity of
 the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace: And
 how was That to be done? Was it by
 compelling men to pretend that they All
 think alike? No: For This, instead of
 Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace, is
 indeed nothing else, but either Unity of
 Opinion in the Bond of Ignorance, or
 Unity of Practice in the Bond of Hypo-
 crisy. - But the Apostle's meaning is, Keep
 the Unity of the Spirit, *With all lowliness*
(says he) and meekness, with long-suffering,
forbearing one another in Love. Again:

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Phil. ii. 2 ; That ye be like-minded ; how ? S E R M.
XIV.
why, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind ; let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of Mind. St Peter also explains himself after the same manner ; 1 Pet. iii. 8 ; Finally be ye all of one mind. How ? Is it by following each other ignorantly and implicitly ? No : but, having compassion (says he) one of another, love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. This is That Charity, which whosoever has not, the Text clearly affirms he cannot be a good Christian : And whosoever has it, cannot easily fail in any Other instances of Virtue ; For Love, is the Fulfilling of the Law.



1423



SERMON XV.

The Nature of Relative Duties.



COL. iii. 20, 21, 22.

Children, obey your Parents in all things ; for This is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the flesh.



It is the constant Method of S E R M.
St Paul in all his Epistles, XV.
first to inlarge upon and explain distinctly the particular point or question, which was the occasion of his writing at That time

S E R M. time to *That particular Church*; and then
 XV. to add such *general* exhortations to the
 practice of *all* Christian Duties and Vir-
 tues, as might at all times be of Use to
All Churches, and to *every Christian* in all
 Ages and in every part of the World.
 These *general* Exhortations are, in the
 main, the *same* in *All* his epistles; easy
 and plain, universal and unvaried, suited
 to all Capacities, and containing the most
 important and fundamental Principles of
 Religion. The *former part* of the several
 Epistles usually relates to some *particu-
 lar Controversy* between the *Jewish and
 Gentile Converts*, which at That time
 gave Trouble to the Apostles: And *These
 parts* of his Writings *cannot* be rightly un-
 derstood any other way, than by attending
 carefully to the *occasion* and *State* of the
particular question which he is there de-
 termining. And therefore it has been a great
 Errour in these latter Ages of the World,
 and the Cause of many vain disputes a-
 mong Christians, that, without attend-
 ing to the Design and Scope of a
 Discourse written in an argumentative
 manner, Men have frequently picked out
 and

The Nature of Relative Duties. 331

and applied to *Themselves* single Passages, S E R M. XV.
which, in the course of the Apostle's Argument, had plainly a View only to the State of the then *Jewish* or *Gentile Church*. From this *One* mistake, it is evident, have sprung *all* the vain Controversies concerning *Faith* and *Works*, concerning *Justification* and *Sanctification*, concerning *Election* and *Reprobation*, and the like: wherewith while the Minds of Men have been needlessly distracted, they have been the *less apt* to attend to the *great and weightier Matters* of the Law, to the *moral* and *general Exhortations*, repeated and inculcated universally in *every epistle*, as things by *every Christian indisputably easy to be understood*, and *indispensably necessary to be practised*.

THE Words of my Text are part of the *general Exhortation*, which concludes the epistle to the *Colossians*. In the *Beginning* of This chapter the Apostle exhorts them to *set their affections on heavenly things*, to *mortify every vicious and inordinate appetite*, to lay aside all *Malice* and *Contentiousness* among themselves, and to live in the practice of universal *Love, Charity*

ty

SERM.
XV.

ty and Good-Will : And in the Latter part of the chapter, he recommends to them the Relative Duties of life ; the Duties of Husbands and Wives, of Children and Parents, of Masters and Servants, of Superiours and Inferiours in all Relations. Children, obey your Parents in all things ; for This is well-pleasing unto the Lord : Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged : Servants, obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh.

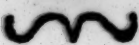
IN discoursing upon these words ; I shall, *First, distinctly* take Notice of the several *Particulars* contained in the Text : And, *Secondly*, I shall thence deduce this *General Observation* ; that the due Performance of the *Relative Duties* of Life, is a principal Means of obtaining both the Blessings of the *present World*, and the Happiness of *That which is to come*.

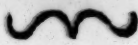
I. IN the *First* place, That which stands *first and most obviously* observable in the Text, is this *Precept* ; *Children, obey your Parents*. In his epistle to the *Ephesians*, the same Apostle expresses this Precept Thus : *Children, obey your Pa-*
rents

rents in the Lord; for This is Right: Honour thy Father and Mother, which is the first Commandment with Promise; ch. vi. 1. S E R M. XV.

In which expression, there is an allusion to the Order or Placing of the Commandments in the Law of *Moses*; This being the First in the *Second Table*, the First of those Commandments which declare our *Duty towards Men*; the First to which is annexed expressly a *particular Reward*; the First Commandment with *Promise*. The natural observation arising from which particular, is, the *reasonableness* and *goodness* of the *Great Commandments of God* both in the *Law* and the *Gospel*. God begins where *Nature itself* does; making the *same things* to be the *prime Foundations of His Law*, which in the nature of things themselves, without *Any Law*, were most reasonable to be practised. The Gospel carries indeed This and all other Moral Precepts to a much *higher* degree of improvement, requiring us to extend our Love towards *all men*, and our Desire of doing good even unto *Enemies* themselves. But the *prior obligation*, is That of *Gratitude to Benefactors*;

SERM. *factors* ; and of making *just Returns* to

XV.  Those, from whom we have received the Benefits of Life. Nevertheless, as clear as this Obligation is, both in the Nature of Things and in the Command of God ; yet, not Irreligion and Atheism only, but *Superstition* also has found means to evade *This*, in like manner as it does all other moral and eternal Obligations. God, (says our Saviour ; *Matt. xv. 4 ; God*) *commanded, saying, Honour thy Father and Mother : But Ye say, Whosoever shall say to his Father or his Mother, it is a Gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by Me,* (that is, it is given to the Service of the Temple, or to some other of what they then called *pious Uses*,) *he shall be free ;* he shall be discharged from all Obligation to relieve his necessitous Parents. Thus (says our Lord) *ye have made the commandment of God of none Effect by your Tradition.* Notions somewhat of the same nature have, in *All Ages* of the World, prevailed over superstitious and corrupt Minds ; teaching them to value things that promote outward Pomp and Show, and Distinctions of Men under Party-Denominations,

nominations, more than Obedience to the S E R M.
eternal and unchangeable Duties of God's XV.
Moral Law. 

2dly. T H E Next thing proper to be taken notice of in the Text, is, that the Particulars here mentioned of the Duty of *Children* and *Servants*, are Only *Instances* of the General *Exhortation*, designed to extend proportionably to persons in *All* Relative Stations and Circumstances of Life *whatsoever*. As Rom. xiii. 7; *Render to All, their Dues; Tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.* To *Magistrates*, there is due from the Subject *Obedience* according to the Laws of the Country, in matters not opposite to the Law of God; *Peaceableness and Quietness* under Government, and a willing *Contribution* towards the *Support* of it. To *Teachers*, or *Spiritual Superiours*, there is due from the People *Such Respect*, as to *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, appointed to exhort Men continually to the Practice of Virtue, and to assist in all the Administrations of Religion: Towards *These*, there ought to be in men
a Wil-

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S E R M. a Willingness to hear and be informed by
 XV. them, and a readiness to observe and practice what they teach ; not blindly and implicitly, (which is the Doctrine of *Rome*;) but in all things which they can *show* to be the *Doctrine and Commands of God*. To *Masters*, there is due from *Servants* *Diligence and Industry, Honesty and Fidelity, Submission and Obedience*, according to the direction in the Text ; *Servants, obey---your Masters according to the Flesh ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of Heart, fearing God : And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men*. In like manner ; Eph. vi. 7 ; *With good Will* (says he) *doing Service, as to the Lord, and not to men ; Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free*. The only difference here to be observed, is, that whereas the *Servants* mentioned by the Apostle, were, in those days, *Slaves*, under the absolute Power of their Masters, without Any Relief under the greatest oppressions ; (for which reason St *Peter* exhorts Such to be patient under the severest

severest hardships, considering that it is S E R M.
thankworthy, if a man for conscience to- XV.
wards God endure grief, suffering wrong-
fully: Whereas (I say) in the Apostles
days the state of Servants was absolute
Slavery, it is Now on the contrary always
to be Understood, that the Duty and Ob-
ligation of those in the lowest Station to-
wards their respective Superiours in This
kind, is such only as arises from Law and
Contract, and is wholly limited by those
Measures. And This concerning the se-
veral particular relative Persons, to whom
the Apostle designed his exhortation to
extend.

3dly. T H E *Third* Particular observable
in the Text, is, the unbounded manner
in which the Apostle expresses the *General*
Duty of Subjection to Superiours, in *eve-*
ry Relative Station of Life: Children,
obey your Parents in all things: Servants,
obey in all things your Masters according
to the Flesh. So elsewhere: Let the Wives
(says he) be subject to their own Husbands
in every thing: And Tit. ii. 9. Exhort
Servants to be obedient unto their own
Masters; and to please them well in all
things.

SERM. *things.* Reason, and the Nature of things,
 XV. and the general Usage of all language,
 ~~~~~ showeth, that in these and all other the like  
 expressions, the phrase, *in every thing*, and  
*in all things*, must necessarily be understood  
 to mean only, *in all things* just, in *all things*  
 lawful, in *all things that are honest and fit*  
*to be done.* In *Human Writings*, these ge-  
*neral* manners of expression, arising from  
 the known and vulgar use of Language, are  
*never* misunderstood: And therefore to  
 misunderstand them in the *Sacred Books*  
*only*, is mere Perverseness. The Gospel nei-  
 ther *inlarges* nor *diminishes* any *Superiour's*  
*Power*; it neither *adds to*, nor *takes from*  
 any *Inferiour's Right*. In *These Cases*, it  
 only confirms and explains the Obligations  
 of Nature; and inforces the *Practice* of  
 the respective Duties, with stronger and  
 more powerful *Motives*. As therefore in  
 all *other Writings*, so in *Scripture* like-  
 wise; the true, the natural, and evident  
 Meaning of such Phrases as these, in *all*  
*things*, *in every thing*, and the like; is  
 not what the word, *all*, suggests in its  
*single* Signification; but what the *vulgar*  
 sense of it is, in *such* expressions and sen-  
 tences.



tences. When we are taught that the S E R M.  
Commands of *God*, or the Laws of *Truth* XV.  
and *Right*, are to be obeyed *in all things*;   
the *nature* of the *Thing*, not the *force* of  
the *single words*, shows that the Obedi-  
ence is to be *universal* and *without excep-*  
*tion*. In *other* cases, where the very *same*  
*words* are used; (as, in the Text, *Ser-*  
*vants obey your Masters in all things*;) the  
nature of the thing *There likewise* no less  
plainly shows, that this *obedience in all*  
*things* is to be *limited*, by its *consistency*  
with the Commands of any *Superiour*  
*Master* either on Earth or in Heaven.  
In *All* language, the signification of *every*  
*word* necessarily depends upon the *other*  
words with which it is connected: And  
where no *Controversy* is concerned, nor  
*Prejudice* interposes, it is always under-  
stood, and cannot but be understood to be  
so, by all Understandings, and by all Capa-  
cities equally, from the Highest to the  
Meanest. When the Scripture mentions  
*The Everlasting God*, it is not the force of  
the word *Everlasting*, but the application  
of it to the *First Cause and Author of all*  
*things*, that makes it denote a true and

SERM. absolute *Eternity*: For when the same  
 XV. Scripture mentions the *everlasting Mountains*, it is understood by all men both of the greatest and of the smallest Understandings, that it there signifies only *such* a Duration, as is proper to the Subject of which it is spoken. These things are, *in their own Nature*, exceedingly evident: And yet where *Party*, or *Interest*, or *Controversy* is concerned, it is wonderful to what a degree men have sometimes, even in so *plain* a case, imposed upon the *ignorant*, and upon the *learned* too. I shall mention but *One* Instance, and leave *Others* to be judged of by the same proportion. In the question about *Transubstantiation*, the Writers of the Church of *Rome* alledge with great confidence, that the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *obvious* sense of the words, *This is my Body*, is plainly in favour of *Their* side of the Question. And yet in reality, the very contrary to *This*, is evidently true. For the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *obvious* sense of the *phrase*, is not that which arises from the signification of the word *Body* singly, but *That* which arises from  
 from

*The Nature of Relative Duties.*

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from its natural signification in *such* an SERM.  
expression, wherein *commemorative Bread* XV.  
is affirmed to be the *Body of Him who is*  
*commemorated thereby.* When a *Picture* is  
spoken of, as being the *person* it represents;  
the *natural*, the *literal*, the *first* and *ob-*  
*vious* sense of the expression, is not that it  
is *really*, but that it is *representatively*, That  
person. When our Lord says, *I am the*  
*true Vine*; the question is not what the  
word, *Vine*, naturally signifies in *other*  
cases; but what it *There* most *naturally*  
*and obviously* signifies, when a *Teacher*  
calls *Himself* a *Vine*, and his *Followers* its  
*Branches*. When *Wisdom* declares concern-  
ing herself, *Ecclus. xxiv. 21. They that*  
*eat me, shall yet be hungry, and they that*  
*drink me, shall yet be thirsty*; the *natural*  
and *obvious*, nay, the *literal* signification  
of the whole Sentence, arises from what  
the terms, *eat* and *drink*, do *Then* most  
*naturally and obviously* signify, when a  
person is speaking, not concerning Food,  
but about *imbibing* and *digesting* a Doc-  
trine. But to return from This Di-  
gression.



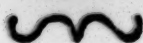
SERM.

XV.

4<sup>th</sup>ly. THE Next Particular observable in the Text, is the *Reason* or *Motive* annexed by the Apostle in order to enforce his exhortation : *For This* (says he) *is well-pleasing unto the Lord*. In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, (as I before observed ; ) after having laid down the same exhortation as in the text ; instead of enforcing it, as he does here, with telling them that *This is well-pleasing unto the Lord* ; he cites the words of the *Commandment* itself, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother* ; and adds, by way of observation, that *This is the First Commandment with Promise*, ch. vi. 2. The *Promise* he means, is ; *That thy days may be long, in the Land which the Lord thy God has given thee*. By which *Promise*, as delivered in the *Commandment to the Jews*, God by a wise and suitable Disposition of Things, very aptly annexed the Blessing of *Long Life*, to *Them* that paid due Regard to Those who were the Means of *giving them Life*. But then, even under the *Law*, (very certainly, though not so explicitly as in the Revelation of the *Gospel*,) it is always to be understood, that in  
all

all Promises of This nature, there was a S E R M.  
*further Reference to a Future and a Better* XV.  
*Life.* Thus in the 11th to the *Hebrews*,  
the Apostle assures, that *Abraham* under-  
stood the promised inheritance, to be laid  
up for him in that heavenly city which has  
foundations, whose Builder and Maker is  
God. Thus the prophetick Tradition a-  
mong the antient *Jews*, that *Jerusalem*  
should be built up with *Saphirs*, *Tobit. xiii.*  
*16*; is by *St. John* made the description  
of That City of God which cometh down  
from Heaven. Thus our Saviour's Pro-  
mise, that *the Meek shall inherit the Earth*,  
*Matt. v. 5*; may well have Reference at  
least, if it be not expressly applied by  
him in his first intention, to That New  
Heaven and New Earth, wherein *Righte-*  
*ousness* is to dwell for ever. Thus, to men-  
tion but One Instance more; That Ex-  
pression of *Ezekiel, ch. xiii. 9.* They  
shall not be in the *Assembly of my people*,  
*neither shall they be written in the Writing*  
*of the House of Israel, neither shall they*  
*enter into the Land of Israel*; cannot be  
doubted but that implicitly means the same  
thing, as, in the New-Testament-lan-  
guage .

SERM. guage, being not written in the Book of  
XV. Life.



5thly and Lastly, FROM the relative *Antithesis* in the respective parts of the text; *Children, obey your Parents in all things*; and, *Fathers, provoke not your Children to anger*: It is observable, that as in *Nature*, in the frame and construction of this *material* Fabrick of the Universe, all *operations* of the parts of *Matter* are *mutual* upon each other, for the Support and Preservation of the Whole; so in *morality* and *religion*, All *Duties* are of reciprocal Obligation. Wherever the Duty of the *Inferiour* is mentioned, it is always to be understood that the Duty of the *Superiour* is proportionably supposed. *Parents* are to support, and be gentle towards their *Children*; Eph. vi. 4. *bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*. *Masters* are to exact Service, not rigorously and cruelly, but with Mildness, and according to the Terms contracted for. *Governours in the Church* are not to *lord it over the Heritage of God*, nor to assume to themselves dominion over the Consciences of Men; but,

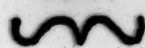


but, as faithful Stewards of the Mysteries S E R M.  
of God, to assist men in *understanding* the XV.  
Will of God, and to exhort them con-  
tinually to *practise* it in Peace and Love.  
*Magistrates* are to govern according to  
those Instructions of *Job. ch. xxix 14*;  
*I put on righteousness, and it cloathed me;*  
*my judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem.*  
*I was eyes to the Blind, and feet was I*  
*to the Lame. I was a Father to the Poor;*  
*and the Cause which I knew not, I searched*  
*out. Lastly, Princes, or Supreme Civil*  
*Governours, are to use Power within the*  
*limits of Law and Reason: Considering*  
*the admonition of the Author of the*  
*Book of Wisdom, ch. vi. 2, Give ear, you*  
*that rule the People, and that glory in the*  
*multitude of Nations; For Power is given*  
*you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the*  
*Highest; who shall try your Works, and*  
*search out your Counsels:---- For he which*  
*is Lord over All shall fear no man's per-*  
*son, neither shall he stand in awe of any*  
*man's greatness: For he hath made the*  
*small and great, and careth for All a-*  
*like.*

II. HAVING

S E R M.

XV.



II. HAVING thus at large considered the several distinct *Particulars* contained in the Text: I shall Now briefly from the Whole, deduce this *General Observation*; that the Due Performance of the *Relative Duties* of Life, is a principal Means of obtaining both the Blessings of the *present World*, and the Happiness of *That which is to come*. As to the Happiness of the *Life to come*; the Promise of *That* being annexed to the Observance of *All* God's Commandments in general, needs not here be particularly enlarged upon: It is sufficiently implied in those words of the Text, *This is well-pleasing unto the Lord*. But what in This case is peculiarly remarkable, is, that the Blessings and Happiness of the *present Life*, are *not only* by the Promise of God *annexed to*, but even in the Nature of things do essentially *consist in*, the due Performance of these *Relative Duties*. As, in the *natural Body*, the Health and Preservation of the *Whole* depends upon *every Part's* performing its proper office; So, in every *political Society*, *Inferiours and Superiours* in all the various stations  
of

## *The Nature of Relative Duties.*

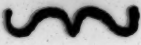
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of Life depend *mutually* upon each other, and the Welfare of the *Whole* upon the Duties of *Both*. *Superiours*, in the conscientious performance of *their Duty*, are the *Protectors and Guardians* of the Rights and Properties of *Those below them*: And *Inferiours*, acting under a Sense of Duty, moved by *Love and Reason* more than by *Compulsion or Fear*, are the most solid Support of the Authority and Peace and Happiness of *Those above them*. The *Corruption and Depravity* of Mankind makes it *necessary*, by the intervention of Human *Laws*, to *compel* men in *some measure* to perform these respective Duties: But a true sense of *religion*, and of the *Reasonableness and Usefulness* and *essential Obligation* of the Duties themselves, would oblige them by a much stronger and securer Tie, to do all the same things *freely and willingly, heartily and sincerely, in publick and in private*; which the best and wisest Laws can but compel those who want such a sense of Religion, to do *unwillingly, slightly and superficially, in publick Appearance only, and in the Sight of Men*. Religion there-  
fore

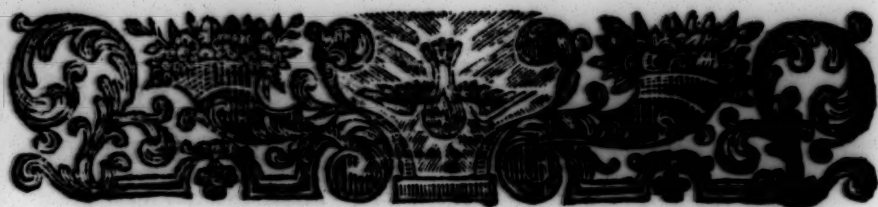
S E R M.  
XV.  
~



S E R M. fore and true Virtue, if they prevailed in  
 XV. the World, would obtain the same happy  
 ~~~~~ Ends *fully and effectually*, which the best  
 and wisest Laws can do but *in part*; and
 Laws are made only to supply, in the best
 manner they can, the Want of true Reli-
 gion and Virtue among Men. *The Law*
is not made for a righteous Man, but for
the lawless and disobedient, for the un-
godly and for sinners, for the unholy and
the profane; 1 Tim. i. 9. Did men uni-
 versally, from a *sense* of the *Right* and
Reason of the *thing itself*, live in an uni-
 form and conscientious Performance of
 the *Relative Duties of Life*; the Prophe-
 cies of That Great Happiness which un-
 der *typical* Representation is foretold as
 coming in the days of the *Messias*, would
 be *literally* fulfilled: *Is. ii. 4*; *They shall*
beat their swords into plough-shares, and
their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall
not lift up sword against nation, neither
shall they learn war any more: And ch. lx.
 18, *Violence shall no more be heard in thy*
land, wasting nor destruction within thy
borders; but thou shalt call thy Walls Sal-
vation, and thy Gates Praise: -----*Thy*
people

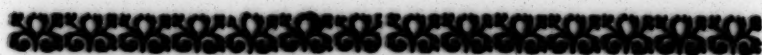
people also shall be *All Righteous*.. But S E R M.
however, even as things *Now* are; would XV.
Superiours in All Times and Places, who 
are the Great *Example* and *Direction* to
the World, endeavour, each in their re-
spective stations, to make use of That
Power wherewith God has intrusted
them, always to the Protection and Sup-
port of *Right*; the Benefits which would
thence accrue to Mankind, even in this pre-
sent imperfect and corrupt State, would be
inconceivably Great. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; *He*
that ruleth over men must be just, ruling
in the Fear of God: And he shall be as the
Light of the Morning, when the Sun riseth,
even a morning without clouds; as the ten-
der Grass springing out of the Earth, by
clear shining after Rain. And Ps. lxxii.
4; *He shall judge the People according*
unto Right, and defend the Poor-----and
punish the wrong-doer.-----He shall come
down like Rain into a fleece of Wool, even as
the Drops that water the Earth: In His
time shall the Righteous flourish, yea, and
abundance of Peace so long as the Moon
endureth.





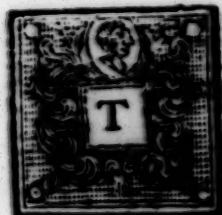
SERMON XVI.

The Inconsistency of the Love of
God with the Love of the World.



I JOH. ii. 15.

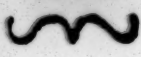
*Love not the World, neither the
things that are in the World:
If any man love the World, the
Love of the Father is not in him.*



THE Great End and Design of S E R M.
Religion, is, by the Tryal of XVI.
mens Virtue and Integrity in
the present World, to qualify
them for the Happiness of
That which is to come: That they who
have

SERM. have been *Faithful* in a small and *tem-*
 XVI. *porary Trust*, committed to them *Here* ;
 ~~~~~ may hereafter be put in Possession of a  
 never-fading *Inheritance*, which shall be  
*their Own* for ever. As our Saviour has  
 largely and distinctly set forth this mat-  
 ter, in his Parable of the Unjust Steward,  
*Luke xvi.*

MISTAKING this True End and De-  
 sign of Religion, men have fallen into  
 Two contrary Extremes: Some having  
 framed to Themselves *such* a notion of  
 Religion, as is *consistent* with the *Vices* of  
 this present World; and Others, on the  
 contrary, *such* a one as is *not consistent*  
 with some of the most considerable and  
 important *Duties* of *Life*. Some have  
 placed the highest Excellency of Reli-  
 gion in *retiring* wholly from the World,  
 so as to render themselves altogether *use-*  
*less* in it: And Others, on the contrary,  
 imagining Religion principally to consist  
 in certain *Forms* and *Ceremonies*, or in the  
 Profession of certain *Systems* of *empty*  
*Opinions*; indulge themselves in the Prac-  
 tice of known *Immoralities*, at the same  
 time that they are most zealously reli-  
 gious.

gious. The proper Remedy for Both S E R M.  
these Mistakes, is to endeavour to give XVI.  
men a *just* idea of the *Nature* of True   
Religion; and of the Influence it ought  
to have upon mens whole Behaviour, with  
regard to the *World*, and to the things  
that are in it. For which Purpose I have  
chosen the words of the Apostle: *Love*  
*not the World, neither the things that are*  
*in the World; If any man love the World,*  
*the Love of the Father is not in him.*

IN discoursing upon which words, I  
shall endeavour to shew, 1<sup>st</sup>, *What* the  
Apostle here means by *the World*, and  
*the Things that are in it*; which he ex-  
horts us, *not to love*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, *What* That  
*Love of the Father* is, with which the  
*Love of the World* is inconsistent. And  
3<sup>dly</sup>, *What* are the principal *Reasons and*  
*Motives*, upon which the Apostle here so  
earnestly cautions men against That *Love*  
*of the World*, which he thus describes as  
inconsistent with the *Love of God*.

I. WHAT the Apostle here means by  
*the World*, and by *the Things that are in*  
*it*, which he exhorts us *Not to love*, he  
himself expressly and distinctly explains



S E R M.

XVI.

*For all that is in the World, saith he, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. That is to say: Not That World which God has created, or any of the things that he has made in it; but That World which Sinners have fashioned to themselves, and which is entirely the Work of their own Invention. Every Creature of God is Good; and every thing that he has made may be made use of with Thanksgiving: But there is an imaginary World, which corrupt Minds have framed to themselves in Perverseness, by Abuse and Misapplication of the good Creatures of God. And concerning the World in This sense of the word, this Wicked Form and Fashion of a World, it may very well and properly be said, what the Author of the Book of Wisdom says concerning Death, ch. i. 13, that God made it not: 'Tis made entirely through Enmity to Him, and in direct Opposition to His Commands. The Particulars of which the World in This sense consists; the wicked and corrupt World,*  
which

which is *not of the Father*, which is no SERM.  
part of the Creation of God; *all the* XVI.  
*things that are in it*, as the Apostle here  
expresses himself, are reducible under  
*Three Heads.*

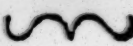
THE First, is the Desire of *unlawful Pleasures*; all *Intemperance and Debauchery, Luxuriousness, Drunkenness, and Uncleaness*. And These are styled by the Apostle, *the Lust of the Flesh*, because they are the things into which men are hurried by *Passion and Appetite*, which is what the Scripture styles *Flesh*; in opposition to the Dictates of *Reason and Religion*, which is what the Scripture calls being *led by the Spirit*. All the *Good things* of Life, which God has created to be *enjoyed with Temperance and Thanksgiving*, according to the Ends and Measures of *Nature*, within the Limits of *Reason, Sobriety and Good manners*, and consistent with the more Noble Views and Improvements of *Religion*: All *These things*, I say, are the Gifts and Blessings of God, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. But when men, in-  
stead of governing their *Passions and Ap-*

S E R M.  
XVI.

*petites by Reason, do on the contrary suffer their Reason to be over-ruled by Passions and Appetites; subverting the natural Order of God's Creation, and giving no attention to those Superiour Faculties, which were designed to distinguish men from the Beasts that perish: their Injoyments in This case are of Such a nature, that they can neither pray for them beforehand, nor return Thanks for them afterwards, as Blessings of God; but are forced to reflect upon them with Shame, whether they will or no; as being conscious that these things proceed not from the Father and Creator of the Universe, but from what the Apostle here styles the World by way of opposition; That World, which is an Enemy to God; and concerning which St Paul speaks, when he says of Wicked men, that the God of This World has blinded their minds, 2 Cor. iv. 4.*

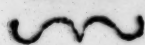
THIS is the *First Particular; the Lust of the Flesh.* The *Second Head*, under which the Apostle here reduces *all the things that are in the World*, in the *wicked and corrupt World*, is the *unlawful*



*ful Desire of Riches; the Desire of Riches* S E R M. XVI.  
*by unjustifiable Means, and to no valuable Purposes.* And these are here styled   
*the Lust of the Eyes; because the Love of Riches, as such, and as it stands here distinguished from Other vitious affections; the Covetous Desire of Riches for Riches sake, without any regard to the True and Beneficial Uses of them; is but feeding the Eyes with a mere fruitless View of unprofitable Treasure, with the empty Shows of Vanity and Deceit. What Good is there, says the Wise man, Eccles. v. 11, What Good is there to the Owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their Eyes? There is One alone, says he, and there is not a Second, ch. iv. 8, yea, he hath neither Child, nor Brother; yet is there no end of all his Labour, neither is his Eye satisfied with Riches; neither saith he, for whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also Vanity. The Phrase, neither is his Eye satisfied with Riches, is the same as what he elsewhere expresses, Prov. xxvii. 20, Hell and destruction are never full; so the Eyes of man are never satisfied.* And from hence have been de-

S E R M.

XVI.



PROV. xxii.

9.

rived those *particular manners of speaking* in Scripture, where *Liberality* is styled a *Bountiful Eye*, and a *Single* (or *Open*) *Eye*; and *Covetousness*, an *Evil* (or *niggardly*) *Eye*; and the like. Whenever *Riches* are desired and employed as Instruments of *Good*, they are Then indeed *real Blessings of Providence*; *Blessings* to the *Possessors* of them, whom they enable to have *Great Influence* in promoting *Justice*, *Righteousness*, *Charity*, and every Other good Work in the World; And *Blessings* to *Others*, who are Partakers of the *Effects* of those good *Influences*. But when they are only what the Apostle here styles the *Lust of the Eyes*; the Food either of *Covetousness* merely, *without Use*; or of *Vanity* and *Folly*, in an *ill Use* of them: The Desire of them, in That case, is not an *Appetite* of God's creating; 'Tis not *of the Father*, but *of the World*; 'Tis the *creature* merely of a *perverted Imagination*, and of a *corrupt Will*; 'Tis a *Desire* that will perpetually put men upon obtaining *Wealth* by *ill Methods*, and upon employing it in *nothing Good*. The *Temptations* that *This Appetite* ex-  
poses

poses men to, are the Foundation of great Corruption. *They that will be rich,* (says the Apostle,) *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition: For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil: Which while Some coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows: That is, they have exposed themselves to be seduced into such corrupt Practices, the avoiding whereof is That Part of true Religion, which St James calls a man's keeping himself unspotted from the World.* S E R M.  
XVI.

THE Third Head, under which the Apostle here reduces *all the things that are in the World*; in the wicked and corrupt World, considered as opposite to God; is *Ambition*, or the unlawful Desire of *Dominion and Power*. And This is here styled by the Apostle the *Pride of Life*, because both the *Desire of obtaining Power by unrighteous methods*, and the *Pleasure of exercising it in ways of Insolence and Oppression*, have their whole Foundation in *Pride*; in a *presumptuous Imagination*, that *Right and Reason and Equity* are things of No reality,



SERM.

XVI.

C ~

*reality*, and which may at any time give place to *Our Wills and Pleasures*. *Power*, considered in itself, as derived from God the *Fountain* of Power, and as being the *Great Instrument* of securing *Right and Justice* in the World; is indeed justly valuable, and most reasonably attended with the Highest Marks of *Dignity and Esteem*. Upon which account, not only *Angels* in *Heaven*, but *Magistrates* also upon *Earth*, are in some passages of Scripture called *Gods*; and *God himself* is, upon the same ground, styled by *Antient Writers* the \* *Fountain of Divinity*: Not, the *Fountain of the Deity*, as the words were in after-times *ignorantly* misapplied: (For That, is styling *God* the *Fountain of Himself*;) But the *Fountain of Divinity*, meaning all That *Dignity, Authority and Power*, which is in Scripture at any time ascribed either to *Angels* or to *Men*. *Power*, I say, in *This sense*, as derived from God, and exercised to His Glory, and to the Benefit of the World; is indeed greatly valuable, and

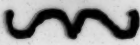
\* *πηγὴ θεότητος*, not *πηγὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. See, *Reply to Dr. Waterland's Defence*, p. 5, 46, 49, 219. And, *Observations on Dr. Waterland's 2d Defence*, p. 53.

most

most justly attended with all possible SERM.  
Marks of Honour and Regard. But the De- XVI.  
*sire of Power* for the Purposes of *Ambition* only, and for the *Pleasure* of bearing *Rule*;  
is what the Apostle here, with great propriety and strictness calls *The Pride of Life*; which is not of the Father, but of the World. 'Tis *That Pride*, or *That* setting up of *Self-Will* in opposition to *Reason and Equity*, which is the Ground and Foundation of almost every Immorality. The *Intemperances* and *Debaucheries* Men are guilty of, for want of *Government* of *Themselves*, are most properly indeed included under the *First Head*, which is the *Lust of the Flesh*. The *Second Head*, which is the *Lust of the Eyes*, or the *Covetous Desire of Riches* for *Riches* sake, is also frequently the occasion of much *Corruption*, of many and great *particular Acts* of *Injustice* and *Hardship* towards *Others*. But the most general and extensive cause of an *habitually injurious and oppressive Temper*, is *This Pride of Life*; this *Love of Power, Domination, and Self-Will*. From hence usually arise *Wars, Desolations, Tyrannies*, and all the *Great, Extensive, and Merciless Oppressions*, which totally  
extinguish

S E R M. extinguish that universal Benevolence to-  
 XVI. wards Mankind, which is the *Charity* re-  
 presented in Scripture as *the Fulfilling of*  
*the whole Law.* To the same Cause also  
 are owing generally, all the *Great Breaches*  
 of our Duty towards *God.* For, *Whence*  
*arises That strange Negligence and Uncon-*  
*cernedness for the Discovery of Truth,*  
 which is the Cause of almost all the Irre-  
 ligious and Superstition in the World; but  
 from this *Pride* of imagining, that our  
 own *Wills, Pleasures and Passions,* are  
*Guides* preferable to the *Reason and Truth*  
 of things? And whence comes it to pass,  
 that so many *monstrously absurd Opinions*  
 and *Idolatrous Practices* have prevailed in  
 the Nations of the World; contrary to all  
 the common *Sense and Reason* of Man-  
 kind, contrary to the *natural Dictates* of  
 every man's own *Conscience,* and in oppo-  
 sition to the protestations and perpetual  
 Endeavours of all *Rational and Virtuous*  
 Men: Whence, I say, has This come to  
 pass; but that it has best served the Pur-  
 poses of *Ambition and Tyranny,* to keep  
 Men in such *Ignorance* by all possible  
*Frauds,* and in the continuance of such  
*Practices* by all the cruel Methods of *Vio-*  
*lence?*



lence? And This may abundantly suffice S E R M.  
for explication of the *First Particular*; XVI.  
*What the Apostle here means by the World*   
which he exhorts us *not to love*; and by  
*the Things that are in the World*, which  
(he saith) are *not of the Father, but of*  
*the World.*

II. I AM to consider *What That Love*  
*of the Father* is, with which the *Love of*  
*the World* is here declared to be inconsistent. Many there are, who by this phrase  
of *loving God*, seem to have meant nothing  
more than a mere *speculative imagination*,  
an *unintelligible enthusiastick Warmth of*  
*Affection*, a *notional abstract Zeal*; some-  
times *withdrawing* Men wholly into a re-  
tirement from the *most useful Duties of*  
*Life*, and sometimes *not withdrawing them*  
from the *Vicious Practices of the World*. But  
the Scripture-sense of *loving God*, is ex-  
pressly declared to be the *Keeping his Com-*  
*mandments*, the looking upon *Him* as our  
*Supreme Governour*, and most *Bountiful*  
*Benefactor*; as a *Reasonable Governour*,  
whose *Commands* are to be obeyed not  
only out of *Necessity*, but out of *Choice*,  
with *cheerfulness* and *affection*, in *Prefe-*  
*rence*

SERM. *rence* to every thing that would entice  
 XVI. us to transgress them. And This being  
 the case, the reason immediately and  
 evidently appears, why, *if any man*  
*love the World*, the *World* in the sense  
 already explained, *the Love of the Fa-*  
*ther* cannot be *in him*. For, in the Na-  
 ture of Things, where-ever two inconsist-  
 ent Objects offer themselves *in competition*,  
 the *Object preferred* is the *Object lov-*  
*ed*; and the preferring or choosing one  
 before the other, is manifestly inconsistent  
 with preferring the Other before That.  
*If any Man* therefore *loves the World*,  
*That World* here described by the Apostle,  
 which is *not of the Father*; the *Love of*  
*the Father* cannot possibly be *in him*: For  
*no man can serve Two Masters*. Of neces-  
 sity he must *either hate the one, and love*  
*the Other*; or *else* he must *hold to the o-*  
*ther, and despise the first*: He *cannot serve*  
*God and Mammon*, Matt. vi. 24. What  
 ever be a man's ultimate View and Aim;  
 (as every man always has *some* principal  
 and ultimate View;) by *This* will the ge-  
 nerality, at least of the *Material* Actions  
 of his life, always be determined. If the  
 Love

Love of *Truth* and *Reason* and *Right*, (or, SERM. XVI. which is the same thing, a Regard to the *God* of *Truth* and *Right*,) be his governing Principle ; his *Desires* after, and his Use of, the *Pleasures*, *Riches*, and *Power* of *This World*, will, according to the natural Order and Design of *God's* creation, always be regulated by, and made subservient to, those Greater and more Noble Ends. On the contrary, if these things, not as they are *In the world*, but as they are *Of the world*, and not of the *Father* ; if these things, in the manner they are here described by the *Apostle*, the *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life* ; be the Object of a Man's Desires, principally and ultimately, as the main End which he has continually in View ; it cannot be but he will pursue his *Pleasures*, without regard to the limitations of *Reason* and *Religion* ; he will heap up unto himself *Riches*, by Methods inconsistent with *Justice*, *Equity* and *Charity* ; he will endeavour to raise himself to *Honour* by mean and unworthy Compliances ; and he will make Use of *Power* to arbitrary and unreasonable Purposes.

And



SERM. And for *This cause*, these things are in  
XVI. Scripture represented as being Enemies to

God: So that, *if any man love the World,*  
*the Love of the Father is not in him.* With  
regard to *Pleasure* in particular, the A-

Rom. xii. postle St Paul exhorts: *I beseech you, bre-*  
1. *thren, by the Mercies of God, that ye pre-*  
*sent your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy,*  
*acceptable unto God, which is your reason-*  
*able Service; And be not conformed to*

Rom. viii. *This World: For the Carnal mind is en-*  
7. *mity against God; for it is not subject to*  
*the Law of God, neither indeed can be:*  
*So then they that are in the Flesh, cannot*  
*please God.* And St Peter, 1 Pet. i. 13,  
14. *Be sober, ---- as obedient children;*  
*Not fashioning yourselves according to the*  
*former Lusts, in your ignorance; But, as*  
*He which hath called you is holy, so be Ye*  
*Holy in all manner of conversation.* And  
St James, ch. iv. 4: *Ye Adulterers and*  
*Adulteresses; know ye not, that the Friend-*  
*ship of the World is Enmity with God;*  
*Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the*  
*World, is the Enemy of God.* In like man-  
ner with regard to *Riches*: In the pas-  
sage before-cited, *They that will be Rich,*  
saith

saith St Paul; that is, they who make SERM.  
*Riches* their ultimate *End* and *View*, will XVI.  
*fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into*  
*many Foolish and Hurtful Lusts, which*  
*drown men in destruction and perdition,*  
1 Tim. vi. 9. And therefore in the same  
chapter, ver. 17. he mentions *Trusting in*  
*Riches* and *Trusting in the Living God*,  
as direct *Opposites* to each other. Lastly,  
with Regard to the *Honours and Esteem*  
of Men, and the corrupt and unworthy  
Compliances, by which the *Pride of Life*  
leads Men to aim at *False Reputation* and  
*Power*; *Do I* ( says the Apostle ) *seek to*  
*please men?* *for if I yet pleased Men, I*  
*should not be the Servant of Christ,*  
Gal. i. 10.

IN *This* sense therefore, and for *these*  
*Causes*, it is, that the *Love of the World*, and  
the *Love of God*, are in the Text declared  
to be inconsistent with each other. And as  
He who *loves the World*, the *Wicked World*  
in the sense now explained, cannot have  
the *Love of the Father in him*: So, on  
the reverse, if any Man has the *Love of*  
*the Father in him*, that is, acts steddily  
and immoveably upon the Principles of  
Truth

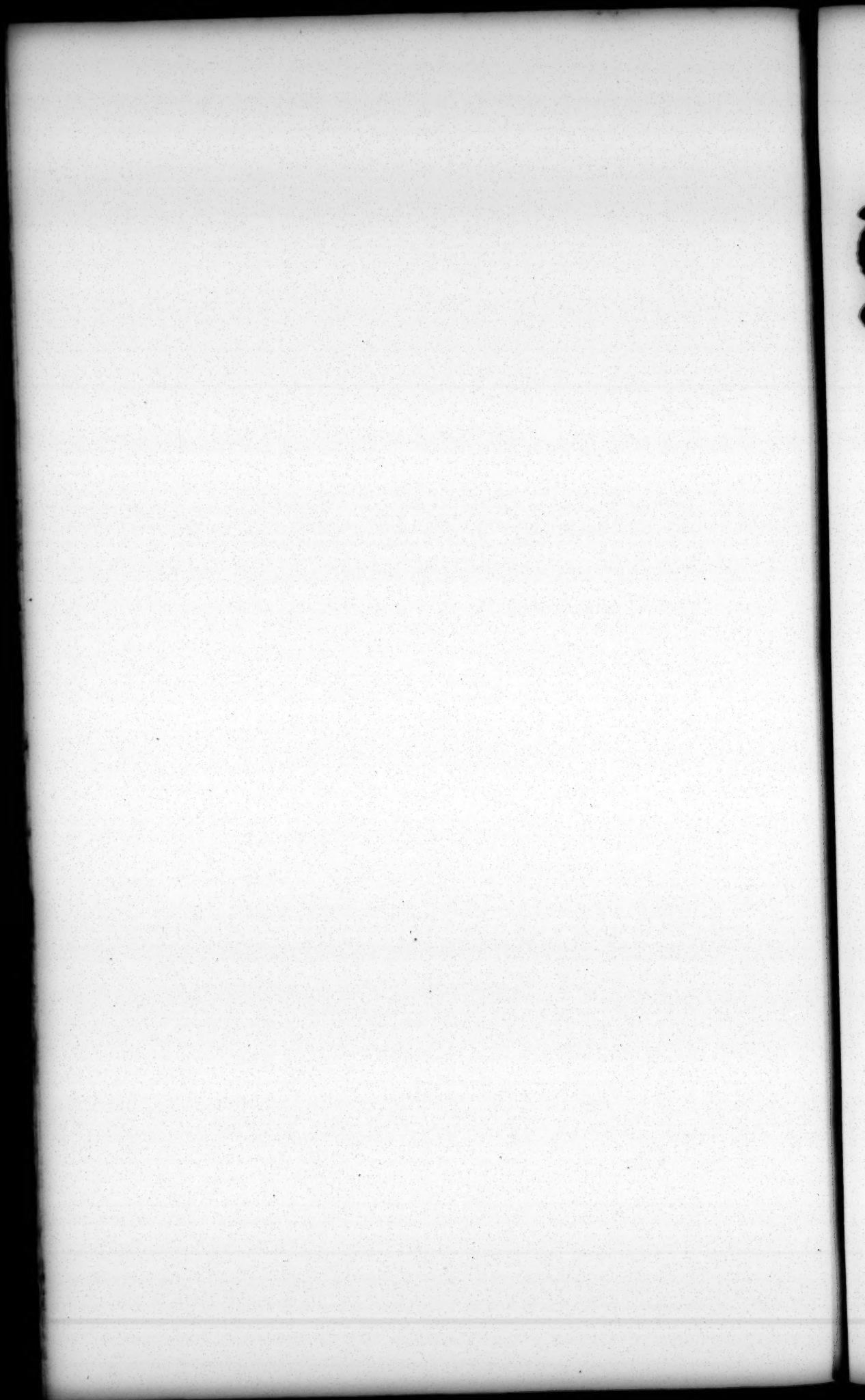
SERM. Truth and Virtue; to *Him* will the *World*,  
 XVI. the *wicked and corrupt* part of the *World*,  
 necessarily bear a *Hatred*, Joh. xv. 19. *If*  
*ye were of the World, the World would*  
*love his own; but because ye are not of the*  
*World, but I have chosen you out of the*  
*World, therefore the World hateth you.* And  
 ch. xvii. 14. *The World hath hated them,*  
*because they are not of the World.* The *Rea-*  
*son and Ground* of which Procedure, is  
 excellently expressed by the Author of the  
 Book of *Wisdom*, ch. ii. 12. *Because the*  
*Righteous is not for Our Turn, and he is*  
*clean contrary to our Doings; he upbraid-*  
*eth us with our offending the Law, and ob-*  
*jecteth to our Infamy the Transgressions of*  
*our education.* He professeth to have the  
 Knowledge of God, and—was made to re-  
 prove our Thoughts.

III. THE *Third and Last* thing I pro-  
 posed, was to consider the *Reasons and*  
*Motives* upon which the Apostle here so  
 earnestly cautions Men against that *Love*  
*of the World*, which he thus describes as  
 inconsistent with the *Love of God*. Its  
*Inconsistency with the Love of God*, that is,  
 of our *Supreme Good* and *ultimate Hap-*  
*pinefs*;



*piness* ; is itself *One* principal and sufficient *Motive*. But *This* and *all other Motives* whatsoever, are *included in*, or *reducible to*, what the Apostle alledges in the words following my Text, ver. 17 ; *The world passeth away, and the Lust thereof ; but He that doth the Will of God, abideth for ever.* There *can be nothing* in *This World* worth purchasing at the Expence of incurring the Divine displeasure. For all the things that are in the World, even those that are *innocent*, much more the *Sinful* ones here mentioned by the Apostle, are *obtained* with uneasiness and much Uncertainty, are *possessed* with much Mixture of Dissatisfaction, are *preserved* with continual Fear and Hazard of losing them ; And, when possessed in the highest Perfection, and for the longest Period, must of necessity pass away in a very few years, to return no more for ever. That Habit of Mind, which is founded in the *Love of Truth*, and in the *Practice of Virtue*, is the only Thing that will continue and improve for ever into a compleat felicity in the eternal Kingdom of God.

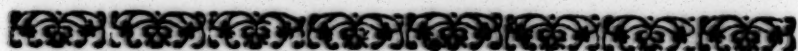
S E R M.  
XVI.  
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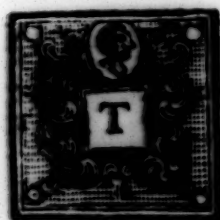
SERMON XVII.

The Folly of mocking at Sin.



PROV. xiv. 9.

Fools make a Mock at Sin.



HERE is nothing, concern-
ing which Men of great Spi-
rits are more apt to make a
wrong Judgment, than con-
cerning the Notion and true

SERM.
XVII.
~

Extent of *Courage* and Magnanimity.
Courage, is a Braveness of Mind, consist-
ing and showing forth itself in a just
Contempt of Danger. And because this is
a Virtue most usually found in men of *bet-*

S E R M. *ter condition, and of a good education; it*
 XVII. *is therefore generally accompanied with*
 more *reputation and honour, with more*
Value and Esteem in the World, than most
Other single Virtues. For this reason,
those who are not indued with this Vir-
tue, are yet very desirous of being thought
to be so; and, as That which is most
esteemed is always most in danger of being
counterfeited, False Courage is very apt to
supply the Place and the Want of True.
For there is a Courage, which deserves
not That Name; and there is a Hardiness,
which is not a Virtue, but a Vice. Some-
thing of this nature there may be ob-
served in the instance of almost every Vir-
tue. Superstition, and Forms, and out-
ward Ceremonies, too usually supply the
place of true Piety towards God. Cove-
tousness calls itself Frugality; and the
name of Generosity often covers the real
crime of Profuseness. The most unchri-
stian Vices of Uncharitableness and Perse-
cution frequently pass under the Title of
Zeal; and Love towards God, is (in some
men's opinion) excellently expressed by
Hatred towards their Brethren, towards
 Men

Men very often much more pious than S E R M.
themselves. Thus likewise in the case of XVII.

Courage; *Fool-hardiness* too often puts on the Garb of This Virtue; and a senseless *pretending to despise*, what ought not and cannot be despised, serves instead of *really contemning* such Dangers, as ought to be contemned. Now the way to *distinguish* rightly, *when* *Courage* is really that Virtue which the Name denotes, is to consider carefully its true Definition: Which, (as I before observed,) is This; It is a Greatness or Braveness of Mind, consisting and showing forth itself in a just *Contempt of Danger*. Where therefore the Contempt of Danger is *just* and *well-grounded*, there such Contempt is the True Virtue of Courage, a true Greatness and Bravery of Mind: But where the Contempt of Danger is *neither reasonable nor just*, there it is *not* Courage, but *Fool-hardiness* and *Madness*. For want of observing this plain distinction it comes to pass, that whereas it is True Greatness and Bravery of Mind, for a Man to hazard his Life in the Defence of his *Country*, in Defence of the *common Rights and Liberties* of Man-

S E R M. kind, in opposition to the unjust Invasions
 XVII. of ambitious *Tyrants*, and the Great Op-
 ~~~~~ pressours of the World; *contempt of Dan-*  
*ger*, in This case, being *just and well-*  
*grounded*, because a Man hazards Himself  
 for the *Publick Benefit*, and for the *pre-*  
*venting* a much *greater and more extensive*  
*Evil*, than the Loss of his own single Life:  
 From hence passionate and unreasonable  
 Men ignorantly call it *Courage*, to ha-  
 zard their Lives in their *own private*  
*Quarrels*; where *Contempt of Danger* is,  
 on the contrary, neither *reasonable nor*  
*just*; because, neither is the Danger at all  
 needful to be run into, nor is the Benefit  
 proposed to be obtained by it, in any man-  
 ner equal to the Evil hazarded. Again:  
 Whereas it is True Greatness of Mind, to  
 be *above* all vain *Superstitions*, to *despise*  
 all false and groundless *Imaginations*, not  
 to be terrified with *empty Phantoms*, nor  
 fear *where no Fear is*; hence weak and  
 profane Men have ridiculously attempted,  
 to cause it to be looked upon as a piece  
 of *Courage* and *Gallantry*, to *despise* the  
*real Differences* of Good and Evil; to  
*mock at Truth* in common with *Errour*, and



at Religion and *Virtue* equally with *Superstition*; to affect to be *above* the Obligations even of the most *reasonable* and *necessary Laws*, without which no *Order*, no *Government*, no *Peace* could possibly subsist in the World; lastly, to dare *undauntedly* to revile the *Maker of all things*, and show their *Fearlessness* even of *God himself*, by openly trampling upon his *Commandments* in their *Lives*, and reproaching his *Name* by *vain Oaths and profane Speeches*. The Fortitude of these Men, is like *that* Courage of a Soldier, who not daring to do his common Duty against the publick Enemy, should be perpetually showing his Prowess in bravely refusing to obey the Orders of his proper Commander. And the *Liberty* These Heroes in Vice promise to their Followers, in discharging them from all Obligations of *Virtue*, and from all Fear of *God*, is excellently described by *St. Peter*, in his 2d epistle, ch. ii. 18; *When they speak great swelling words of Vanity, they allure through the Lusts of the Flesh, those that were clean escaped from Them who live in Error; While they promise them Liberty,*

SERM. *they themselves are the Servants of Corruption*  
 XVII. *tion; For of whom a Man is overcome, of*  
 ~~~~~ *the same is he brought in bondage. These*  
are the persons, who, in the worst and
highest Sense of the phrase, make a Mock
at Sin; and who are accordingly in Scrip-
ture represented as being guilty of the
worst and highest degree of Folly. Fools,
that is, those who in a singular manner,
and by way of emphasis or distinction
above all Others, deserve the Name of
Fools, are They which make a Mock at
Sin. Weaknesses there are in all Men;
and the Most are too often guilty of such
Actions, as would in strictness rank them,
in those particulars at least, among the
Unwise. But the compleat character of
Folly, or that which renders a Man in his
whole denomination, according to the
Scripture-sense, a Fool; is the making a
mock at Sin. Not, being deluded into it
by Ignorance or Mistake; Not, being se-
duced into it by Inadvertency or Surprise;
But, knowingly and deliberately looking
upon it as a trivial matter; mocking at
it as a thing harmless, and of no great
Danger; This is the proper Essence, This
 (if

(if I may so speak) is the *Perfection* of S E R M.
Folly. Nevertheless, because even of *This*, XVII.
there are *Differences and Degrees*; and of
the *Mockers* here spoken of by the Wise
Man, there are *Diverse kinds*; I shall
therefore in the following Discourse endea-
vour briefly, but distinctly, to shew; 1st,
What is *meant* more *particularly*, by *ma-*
king a Mock at Sin; 2^{dly}, Upon what
grounds or reasons, Men are tempted to be
guilty of the several degrees of This Vice;
and 3^{dly}, How *weak* all those Grounds
really are, and how *great* the *Folly* of Act-
ing upon them.

I. IN the *First* place, as to the explica-
tion of the Phrase, *making a Mock at*
Sin; there are three sorts of Sinners, who,
in their several Degrees, may justly be
charged with This Guilt. Of the

1st and *highest* Degree, are those whom
I have partly *already* described, who
esteem it a piece of *Courage* to despise all
Religion, and a *Greatness of Mind* to de-
ride all the Obligations of Virtue. These
are the Persons the Psalmist means, when
he elegantly rises by *Steps* in his descrip-
tion of Sinners from the lowest degree
of

S E R M. of Wickedness to the highest; *Pf. i. 1*;
 XVII. *Blessed is the man, that hath not walked in*
 ~~~~~ *the Counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the*  
*way of Sinners, and hath not sat in the*  
*Seat of the Scornful.* The Scornful, are  
 those whom the Prophet *Jeremy* repre-  
 sents under the *same* Character, and in the  
 Use of the *same* word, as the Wise Man  
 in the Text; *Jer. xv. 17*; *I sat not in*  
*the Assembly of the Mockers.* To sit, (the  
 word used both by *Jeremiah* and by the  
*Psalmist*,) signifies a *fixed, determinate, se-*  
*cure, resolute* establishment in a *Habit* of  
 Wickedness; whereas *walking, or stand-*  
*ing,* in the way of Sinners, represents on-  
 ly *particular* wicked *Actions.* And the  
 Seat of the Scornful, (which is the *Psal-*  
*mist's* phrase,) signifies the *Highest Power*  
 and *Dominion* of Impiety. Just as *our*  
*Saviour,* in the *Revelations,* elegantly de-  
 scribes the Tyranny of the Antichristian  
 Church, by calling it *The Throne of Sa-*  
*tan*; *Rev. ii. 13*; *I know thy works, and*  
*where thou dwellest, even where Satan's*  
*Seat,* (in the Original it is, *where Satan's*  
*Throne*) *is.* The Persons who, in *This*  
 sense, *make a mock at Sin,* are the *A-*  
*theists,*

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*theists* ; and the openly *Profane* ; Those who think it *Wit*, to turn the most serious matters into *Ridicule* ; and commit the most *unjust and unrighteous Actions*, without Any reluctance or *Abhorrence*. These are the Persons whom *Solomon* describes, *Prov. x. 23* ; *It is as Sport to a Fool, to do mischief* ; and *ch. xxvi. 18* ; *As a Mad-man who casteth Firebrands, Arrows and Death* ; so is the man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and saith, *Am not I in sport* ? The same sort of Persons, are in the *New Testament* mentioned by *St. Jude*, ver. 17. of his *Epistle* ; Remember, saith he, the words which were spoken before of the *Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*, how they told you there should be Mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly Lusts.

THEY who think it an *Objection* against the Truth of Christianity, that there should be found, even in the World that calls itself *Christian*, so much Open Profaneness and Impiety as there is ; may do well to observe, how distinctly these things are foretold in the *New Testament* ; and consequently that the Fulfilling of  
them

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SERM. *them* is not an Argument *against*, but a
 XVII. strong Evidence *for*, the truth of revealed
 ~~~~~ Religion.

2dly; THE next sort of Sinners, who may justly be charged with *making a Mock at Sin*, are those, who do not indeed in *Words*, like those before-mentioned; but yet, in their *Actions*, do equally bring Contempt upon Religion. In their *Profession* they pretend to *believe in God*, but their *Practice* is the same with that of *Atheists and Infidels*. These are elegantly described by St Paul; Tit. i. 16; *They profess, that they know God; but in Works they deny him; being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* This *practical Insult* upon Religion, This *Contempt of Virtue and Goodness* in men's *Lives and Actions*, is as *really* in the Sight of God, though not so *offensively* in the Eye of the World, a *making a Mock at Sin*, in the Sense of the Text; as the most *profane Speeches* even of *professed Atheists*.

3dly; TO *make a Mock at Sin*, may, in the last place, signify, entertaining so *slight* an Opinion of the *Evil and Danger*



ger of Sin, as makes men who are *not* S E R M.  
entirely profligate, yet content themselves XVII.  
with *distant* resolutions of future Re-  
pentance, and in the mean time speak  
Peace to themselves in the Practice of  
Unrighteousness, or in the Enjoyment of  
unlawful Pleasures. This may properly  
enough be called, though not in so *high*  
a sense as the forementioned Instances, a  
*making a Mock at Sin*. It is a *seeming* to  
be *afraid* of it, and yet *not really* abhor-  
ring it. It is entering voluntarily into the  
Snare of the Devil, and yet not daring to  
resolve to continue in it. It is running  
into a Danger, with a Design to come  
out of it again; *as a Bird hasteth to the*  
*Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his*  
*Life*. In a word; it is *playing* with the  
Instruments of *Death*, and *sporting* with  
*Destruction*; for want of *seriously* and *in*  
*earnest* considering, what a dreadful thing  
it is to fall into the hands of the Living  
God, whose Wrath is a consuming Fire.  
The Description of *Leviathan* in the Book  
of *Job*; ch. xli. 5; may very naturally be  
applied to This Purpose; *Wilt thou play*  
*with him as with a Bird? or wilt thou*  
*bind*

SERM. bind him for thy maidens? Shall the Com-  
 XVII. panions make a Banquet of him? shall they  
 part him among the Merchants? Canst thou  
 fill his skin with barbed irons, or his Head  
 with Fish-spears? Lay thine hand upon  
 him, remember the Battle, do no more.

II. AND now, having shown particularly, *what* is meant by this phrase of *making a mock at Sin*; I proceed, in the 2d place, to consider *upon what Grounds or Reasons* men are tempted to be guilty of the several degrees of this Vice. And

1st, As to those *Sitters in the Seat of the Scornful*; those *profane Spirits*, who esteem it a mark of *Courage* to despise all Religion, and a *Greatness of Mind* to deride all the Obligations of Virtue: The only Ground *These* have to go upon, is *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. Either they must disbelieve the *Being of God*, and disclaim all difference of good and evil, and renounce in general all expectation of a future State; or at least they must reject all divine *Revelation*, casting behind them all the Promises and Threatnings of God, and denying that he will ever judge men according to their Works. This is excellently

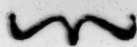
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lently represented to us by St. Peter, in S E R M. his Second Epistle ; ch. iii. 3 ; *There shall* XVII.  
*come, saith he, in the last days Scoffers,*  
*walking after their own Lusts, and saying,*  
*Where is the Promise of his coming ? For*  
*since the Fathers fell asleep, all things con-*  
*tinue as they were, from the Beginning of*  
*the Creation. The Persons the Apostle*  
*here describes, looked upon all things as*  
*going on, it seems, in a constant and ne-*  
*cessary Course of Nature : One generation*  
*of men passed away, and another came*  
*in the room of it ; but the World remain-*  
*ed still as it was ; And thus, for ought*  
*They knew, things might hold on for*  
*ever. The thing which Hath been, they* Ecd. i. 9.  
*thought, is That which Shall be ; and*  
*that which Is done, is That which shall*  
*be done ; and there is no New thing under*  
*the Sun. Upon This foundation, the same*  
*kind of Debauchees argue with them-*  
*selves in All Ages ; Let us eat and drink,*  
*for to morrow we die. Come ye, say they,*  
*I will fetch wine, Is. lxvi. 12, and we*  
*will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to*  
*morrow shall be as This day, and much*  
*more abundant. There is a most elegant*  
*descrip-*



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description of This sort of Sinners, in the 2d chapter of the Book of *Wisdom*; ver. 1; *The Ungodly said, reasoning with themselves but not aright;-----We are born at all adventures, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the Breath in our Nostrils is as smoak, and a little Spark in the moving of our Heart:-----Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth:-----Let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the gray hairs of the aged; Let our Strength be the Law of Justice, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Thus the only foundation This kind of Mockers build upon, is the Hope that there will be no future state, no judgment to come.*

2dly; T H E second sort; those who pretend to believe a God, and another life after this, and yet live as viciously as if they believed it not. The manner of These, is to flatter themselves with a Notion, that Sin is not of so dangerous a nature, as the Preachers of the Gospel represent it;

it; that *Morality*, or Righteousness of S E R M.  
Life, is not absolutely of indispensable XVII.  
importance; and that God will be very  
well satisfied with a *Form* of Godliness,  
with a *Zeal* for *Names and Distinctions*  
of Religion, though not accompanied with  
*Moral Virtue*. And then

3dly; As to the *last* sort of Men, who  
(I said) might also justly be charged with  
being in some degree guilty of the same  
Vice of *making a Mock at Sin*; namely,  
those who are really sensible of the Neces-  
sity of true Repentance and Amendment,  
and yet at the present speak Peace to them-  
selves in the Practice of Unrighteousness,  
or in the Enjoyment of unlawful Pleasures:  
The *only* Foundation *These* can possibly  
go upon, is an artificial Design of secu-  
ring to themselves Both *Worlds*, and of  
ingrossing *More* Happiness than either  
God or Nature designed them; by enjoy-  
ing securely the Pleasures of *Sin* for a  
Season, and at the End by Repentance  
obtaining the Reward of *Virtue* likewise.  
This is what the Apostle calls, *mocking of*  
God; *Gal. vi. 7*; and is indeed more tru-  
ly a *mocking* or *deceiving* of Themselves.

SERM. As will appear, if we proceed now, in the  
XVII. *Third place,*



III. To consider, how *Weak* all the forementioned *Grounds or Reasons* are, upon which men are tempted to be guilty of the several Degrees of this Vice; and consequently how *Great* the *Folly* is of Acting upon those Grounds: Fools *make a Mock at Sin.* And

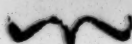
*Ist*; As to that *highest* degree of *Profane Mockers*, who have *no other* Hope to rest upon but that of *Atheism and Infidelity*; *Their Folly* is *greater* than can be expressed in words, or than can rightly be conceived by any Imagination. For, *What* is the State of such a person, when God taketh away his Soul? Can he be *sure* that there is *no God*? or can he *demonstrate* to himself, that there will be no future state? The *Hardiest Unbeliever* never yet pretended to have *demonstration* in this case. And if he had, yet all the Comfort, all the Hopes, that could be built even upon *That*, would be but the Hope of a Beast, the Expectation of perishing as if he had never been. But since there *can* be *no* such demonstration, on  
the



the side of Atheism ; the consequent Possibility on the *other* side, that there may be a God, proves the Folly of the profane Mocker to be *intolerable* ; the *Probability* that there is a God, still *increases* That Folly ; the *Certainty*, the *Demonstration*, that there *cannot but be* a God, shows it to be what *Solomon* elegantly sets forth in that accumulative expression ; *Eccles. vii. 25 ; the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness.* For if there is a God, as the Works of Nature demonstrate that there is ; both *Reason itself* declares, and *Revelation* fully confirms, that he *will* govern the World in Righteousness, and in the End judge every man according to his Works. That *poor* Objection of the Scoffers mentioned by *St. Peter*, that all things *hitherto* continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation, and that therefore they *never* will be otherwise ; discovers the extreme Shortness of Those men's Understandings, who consider not that God with much long-suffering gives men Space of Repentance, and can as easily judge the World after a Thousand years as after

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One day's space. Upon which delay of his Lord's Coming, if any wicked Servant flatters himself that he will not come at all, and upon That Assurance of Impunity hardens himself in his Impiety; *the Lord of That Servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. For, as in the days that were before the Flood, men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark; And knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away: And, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all: Even thus (says our Lord) shall it be, in the day when the Son of Man is revealed; St Luke xvii. 30; Then shall the Lord convince ungodly men of all their hard and profane Speeches which they have spoken against him: And*  
the

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the wicked, seeing the Salvation of the S E R M.  
righteous, *shall with anguish of Spirit say* XVII.  
*within themselves*, (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of *Wisdom* ; ch. v. 4 ;)  
*We Fools accounted his Life Madness, and his End to be without Honour ; How is he numbred among the children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints !*

2dly, As to those who cannot argue themselves into Infidelity, but *believe* the Certainty of a Future State and of a Judgment to come ; and yet live viciously, and continue Impenitent, upon a *general, loose, and inconsiderate* expectation, that Sin is less *dangerous*, and God more *merciful*, than the Preachers of the Gospel represent him : The Folly of making a Mock at Sin in *This* Sense, and upon *This* Ground ; (which is indeed nothing else, but resolving to *neglect* a mortal Disease as of *no Danger*, and to shut *one's Eyes* upon the Mouth of *Destruction* :) The Folly of *This*, I say, is well reprov'd by the Author of the Book of *Ecclus* ; ch. xxi. 2 ; *My Son,-----flee from Sin as from the Face of a Serpent ; for-----the Teeth thereof are as the Teeth of a Lion, slaying the*  
Souls



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*Souls of Men, and, All iniquity is as a two-edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed. To imagine that God will be pleased with an empty Form of Godliness, and accept a Zeal for mere Names and Distinctions of Religion, without true Virtue and Holiness of Life, is, to be so foolish as to think God more easily deceived, even than mortal Men; and that the Searcher of Hearts will be imposed upon with an outward Profession of Service, which even an Earthly Superiour would with indignation reject. Little children, saith St John, let no man deceive you: He that Doth righteousness, is righteous. The Vain Hope of those who rely on any Other Foundation, is affectionately described in the 5th chapter of the Book of Wisdom; ver. 14; The Hope of the Ungodly, is like Dust that is blown away with the Wind; like a thin Froth, that is driven away with the Storm; like as the Smoke which is dispersed here and there with a Tempest; and passeth away as the Remembrance of a Guest, that tarrieth but a day: But the Righteous live for evermore; their Reward also is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the most High.*

3dly,

3dly and lastly; As to those who are truly sensible of the indispensable Necessity of a Virtuous life, and yet at the present speak Peace to themselves in the Practice of Unrighteousness and in the enjoyment of Unlawful Pleasures, upon an Intention of Repenting and Amending hereafter: The Folly of making a mock at Sin in *This* sense, is the Folly of Playing with Death, and Sporting with Destruction: It is the Folly of letting slip opportunities, which possibly, nay, very probably, may never be retrieved: It is the Folly of provoking God to cut us off in his Wrath, and to assign us our Portion among Hypocrites and Unbelievers. To conclude; It is the Folly of incapacitating a man's self more and more for the doing of That, which yet is of absolute Necessity not to be left undone. For except we do effectually repent and amend, and That speedily too, so as to bring forth the Fruits of Virtue and Righteousness, we must inevitably perish: And yet the longer any man continues in Sin, the more difficult it becomes for him to leave it off. For he grows *hardened* at length through the Deceitfulness of Sin; and by  
being

SERM. XVII. being long *accustomed to do Evil*, it becomes in a manner (figuratively and comparatively speaking) as difficult for him to *learn to do well*, as for the *Ethiopian to change his Skin*, or the *Leopard his Spots*. The Prophet *Jeremy* most elegantly sets forth the *same Difficulty* in another Comparison, wherewith I shall conclude; ch. xii. 5; *If thou hast run with Footmen, and They have wearied thee, then How canst thou contend with Horses? And if in the Land of Peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the Swelling of Jordan?*

THAT every One of Us, may in Time set about the Practice of our Duty, before our Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, and the things that belong to our Peace be hid from our Eyes; God, of his infinite mercy, grant, &c.



